Memoir of Mr. Frank Hopkins , 2011

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

FRANK SNOWDEN HOPKINS

Memoir

The Harvard Year and World War II

Back to Academia

Our Nieman Fellowship year was a magnificent experience. I was swept up in the lively intellectual life of a great university at exactly the right time in my career, and benefited from it enormously. In 1938 I was 30 years old and had been struggling for several years with various forms of journalism and free-lance writing. It was not easy to get ahead in the daily grind of newspaper work in Minneapolis, Richmond, and Baltimore, and the freedom and stimulation of Harvard enchanted me. Counting the hours I spent in classrooms, in socializing with members of the faculty, in browsing through a long reading list in the stacks of Widener Library, and in evening reading at home, I must have averaged at least twelve hours a day in some form of educational activity. It was exactly what I wanted most to do, and I was entirely, gloriously happy.

Our arrival at Harvard began in most dramatic fashion, for we arrived only hours ahead of the great New England hurricane of September 20, 1938. This horrendous storm, which caused tidal waves all along the coasts of Long Island, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, took a heavy toll of human lives, not to mention the devastation of property and disruption of power lines and communications. Ruth and I had driven up from Baltimore by easy stages, pelted all the way by heavy rains. She was pregnant with our first child, a great event in our lives after years of waiting, and we were determined to drive

slowly, with several overnight stops. The last of these was with my Hepburn relatives on the Connecticut shore. The day of the storm, we got away for Cambridge in mid-morning, and were horrified to learn later that the Hepburn frame cottage was swept away by waves that afternoon and deposited half a mile inland.

Our route took us through New London, Westerly, and Providence, all of which were hard hit by the hurricane a few hours after we passed through. Hundreds of people were drowned by waves which piled up in the rocky areas where the water was pushed up into funnel-shaped inlets, forming high waves that swept away people and property. We were aware of black clouds scudding overhead, but were safe in a large brick hotel in Cambridge when the storm reached us. It was not until next day that we learned of the magnitude of the disaster. It was a close squeak for us.

Picking our way through the fallen trees and power lines of Cambridge for the next several days, we checked in with Harvard authorities and became acquainted with our Nieman colleagues and with the man who was to supervise our program. This was the distinguished Pulitzer-Prize-winning poet, Archibald MacLeish. Archie was not only a poet but a journalist, well-acquainted with top figures in both literature and publishing. He had been working for several years on the staff of Fortune for a salary which dazzled me, for it was about six times what I was paid in Baltimore. The theory was that someone like Archie was needed to shepherd our group through the academic year and interpret Harvard to newspapermen — and vice versa. I liked the personable MacLeish, as we all did, but was inclined to resent the notion that after William and Mary, Columbia, and some part-time courses at Johns Hopkins I would need guidance at Harvard.

The Nieman Fellows that first year were a diverse group. The oldest was Louis M. Lyons, 40, a thoughtful and scholarly reporter for the Boston Globe. He was eventually to take over direction of the Nieman program. Next oldest was Irving Dilliard, 36, of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, an editorial writer who had written many scholarly articles on the Supreme Court and its decisions. Then there was Edwin A. Lahey of the Chicago

Daily News, also 36, who had had little formal education, never having attended college. He was a nationally known writer on labor affairs. Perhaps in his case a guide like our friendly MacLeish was needed. Other Nieman Fellows included two editorial writers from Alabama; a young Kentuckian whose family owned the local paper in Paducah; a young science writer from the Boston Herald and an editorial writer from the Washington Post, a Dartmouth graduate who was interested in Latin American affairs.

In looking over courses listed in the university catalogue, I conscientiously focused on offerings in government and economics which seemed relevant to my study project. But I was also tempted by the possibilities in history, simply to indulge my personal interest in following up the courses I had taken at Johns Hopkins on the Roman Empire, a period which has always fascinated me. So I settled on a history of the Byzantine Empire, taught by Robert Blake, which I found most rewarding. Covering the period from the founding of Constantinople in 330 A.D. to its capture by the Turks in 1453, Blake's lectures convinced me that the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire was not a long period of decadence, as it had been pictured by Edward Gibbon in his celebrated Decline and Fall, but a separate historical development which had reached high levels of accomplishment. Lasting for more than 1,100 years, it had blocked the expansion of Islam into Europe for several critical centuries, meanwhile exercising a civilizing influence on Russia and the Balkan countries. What particularly interested me about this history was that it followed quite a different pattern from the one emphasized by Oswald Spengler, the scholarly German author of The Decline of the West. Spengler thought that each civilization followed a biological type of progression, from youth through maturity to old age and decadence. But the Byzantine pattern was a series of peaks and valleys. In some periods the empire was in a declining phase, but then new forces would appear which would regenerate it and spur it on to new achievements. I found this different model fascinating and suggestive. It was encouraging to think that decadent trends in our own civilization might be overcome by forces of regeneration and recovery.

Naturally my Nieman comrades considered me a bit eccentric for my devotion to the Byzantines, and I had to undergo some good-natured ribbing. What did this history have to do with my work for the Baltimore Sun?, they would ask. I would respond that I was not delving back into antiquity solely for personal interest, but was trying to obtain some perspective on our own times and how Western man might improve his chances of building a better future.

As the year wore on I sampled many courses, learning something from each. But I found the most profitable use of my time to be reading books relevant to my study project on the government's role in the economic system. The record I kept showed that by the end the year I had perused some 150 volumes. In the second semester I explored two fields still new to me, sociology and cultural anthropology. What I was trying to get at was a better understanding of human motivation and social causation, of the reactions of populations to the march of circumstances such as economic depression and prolonged unemployment. Much of what I learned came from books and from personal contacts with three gifted Harvard professors, Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton in sociology and Clyde Kluckhohn in anthropology. Parsons and Kluckhohn especially were to remain close personal friends for as long as they lived, and my gratitude to both is unending.

Meanwhile, my wife and I and the other Nieman Fellows and their wives were hospitably entertained by many members of the Harvard faculty. My old friend Payson Wild whom I had known in Paris in 1928 and his wife Marian were particularly cordial, and we made congenial new friends on every side. A major contribution to the intellectual activities of the Nieman group was made by our “curator” (his curious Harvard title), Archibald MacLeish. Endeavoring both to promote contacts with Harvard scholars and with leading figures in the world of journalism, Archie arranged a series of weekly dinners at which leading American publishers and editors talked on issues of the day. The guests included, for example, Henry R. Luce, Walter Lippmann, John Gunther, Charles A. Merz, and Heywood

Broun. From the Harvard faculty we had a representative selection of professors, the most frequent participant being Felix Frankfurter of the Harvard Law School.

Frankfurter was a friend of MacLeish and seemed to feel that it was essential to his personal objectives to make members of our group his devoted disciples. A very emotional man, he was especially keyed up in 1938-39 by Nazi persecutions in Germany and by the imminent war in Europe. I am afraid that I was among the Fellows who most objected to his dominating attitude. I did not necessarily disagree with his views, many of which I approved, but I strongly resented his constant assumption that we had no right to views of our own. It was our duty, he insisted, to help promote the courses of action in which he believed. I very much wished he would leave us alone and trust us to work at our own courses of action.

The Nieman dinners were often interesting, and helped us better to understand conflicts in American life over the Roosevelt administration and the gathering storm in Europe. They had another effect on me, however, which was to sharpen my feeling that I was out of place in the newspaper business. I had never really intended to commit myself to daily journalism as a profession, for it seemed to me that most of what people like myself wrote for newspapers was ephemeral and of no enduring importance. I was passionately devoted to my studies at Harvard, and as the year drew to a close I had less and less enthusiasm for returning to Baltimore.

Nevertheless, I thought the Nieman program was a splendid one, very important to American journalism. It has been so successful over the years since my time that it has become established as the finest educational experience for professionals in the news media which exists anywhere in the world. Among the several hundred journalists who have benefited from it have been people of both sexes, many ethnic backgrounds, every sort of communications media, and (although not financed from the original Nieman funds) many foreign nationalities. My own Nieman year was the greatest single intellectual experience of my life, and was a turning point in my career which opened many

subsequent opportunities for advancement. As Ruth and I drove back to Baltimore in June, happily bringing our newborn son, we felt eternally grateful to Harvard and the Nieman program.

The Impact of World War II

Although the United States did not become a belligerent in World War II until two and a half years after my Harvard year ended, we were conscious of the gathering conflict from 1938 on. When the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939 a period began which was to dominate the lives of my generation for the next six years. It was the greatest war in which our country has ever been engaged, by a very long way, and in fact the greatest martial conflict in the history of the world. British writers used to refer to World War I as “the Great War,” but this one was even greater. As for the American people, we were only briefly involved in World War I, for the outpouring of American military power and supplies into Europe tipped the balance in 1918 before most of our troops saw any actual fighting. But World War II involved the United States in such an all-out effort as had not been seen in the Western Hemisphere since Civil War days. It was not as bloody for Americans as the Civil War, especially in the South, but of far greater world importance.

My role in World War II was to spend four years in a Baltimore shipyard, the Maryland Drydock Company, as the organizer and director of a large educational program in which training in engineering and mechanical skills was given to an estimated 15,000 men and women who worked as shipfitters, electricians, sheet metal workers, pipefitters, machinists, welders, and in many other crafts. This was such an improbable development that I had better back up and explain how it happened.

For two years after returning from Harvard in June, 1939, I continued in the employ of the Sun papers, working part of the time as an editorial writer but most of the time as a reporter on the local news staff, doing pretty much the same kind of work I had done before my fellowship year. I would have welcomed an opportunity to become a

Washington or foreign correspondent, but there was a lot of nepotism in the Sun paper organization and the positions which appealed to me always seemed to me to go to someone else. These two years were an unhappy and frustrating period, for I was making very little use of the Nieman experience. Friends at Harvard were sympathetic, and I was offered a graduate fellowship in sociology which might have led into an academic career. There were personal reasons why I could not accept in 1940, and by the next spring, that of 1941, it seemed inevitable that the United States would soon be drawn into the European war.

Feeling that I could not be a university student at a time when my country was about to enter a great global struggle, I went to a friend in industrial relations work and asked whether Baltimore defense plants could make use of persons with my qualifications. The answer was strongly affirmative. It led to my accepting a position in industrial relations at Maryland Drydock, a ship repair company which operated drydocks and outfitting piers on the south side of Baltimore harbor. I began work there in early July, five months before the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. Thus began one of the most challenging and fulfilling periods of my life, extremely valuable to my subsequent career.

The Maryland Drydock Company had employed only about 1,000 workers in peacetime, and during the depression years often had only from two to four ships to work on at any one time. In 1941, however, it was expanding rapidly. The United States was giving aid to the British Ministry of Shipping under the Lease-Lend Program of President Roosevelt, which meant that many British ships were coming in for repairs. It was also moving as speedily as possible to bring into service laid-up American ships left over from World War I in order to make them available for hauling the steady stream of supplies and munitions being sent overseas to the Allies. This reconditioning and modernization program required additional shipyard manpower, and by the time I arrived on the scene our company had expanded to 3,500 employees. At the peak of the war effort in 1944-45 the total number reached 10,500.

At first my duties were in the general personnel and labor relations field, in which I already had some background. But very soon a new responsibility was thrust upon me. Our shipyard was able to employ plenty of inexperienced workers, but was very short of trained mechanics. The shortage was particularly acute in certain skills needed only in shipyards, the most important of which were those of the Mold Loft and Shipfitting Department. Shipbuilding work had been in the doldrums all during the inter-war years, and there were very few experienced shipfitters to be found. It was necessary to organize a training program to upgrade the skills of our new people and make them into productive workers. Someone had to plan and operate such a program, and for reasons never made clear I was chosen to be the one.

It would be tedious to describe all the problems I had in developing a company training program. I have never been able to do this in less than 5,000 words or so, so will be unable to do so in the present chapter. So let me just give a few examples. To eliminate our worst bottleneck, that in the Shipfitting Department, I hit upon the idea, after consulting with several experienced people, of operating after-hour classes in reading marine blueprints. These were conducted for our learners after normal work hours, on overtime pay, on our own shipyard premises. And soon we were in business with an expanding training program.

Let me explain, as best I can, what a shipfitter does. Working from blueprints prepared by naval architects — or in our repair yard, oftentimes from measurements made on the actual ship — a shipfitter prepares on heavy material known as template paper a kind of pattern known as a template. The markings from this template are then transferred to steel plates and beams by means of a hammer and punch. The next operation takes place in a fabricating shop, where the marked steel is cut by machinery to the size and shape indicated by the punch marks. Then the finished piece is transported out to the ship for which it was intended, and there the shipfitter takes over again, fitting it into place with the

help of ironworkers, welders, and men with acetylene torches known as burners, who can trim off any excess.

So far, so good. But a ship is not a rectangular structure like a house, but has all the curves of a fish. It has fore-and-aft curves known as sheer, for a ship's hull somewhat resembles a lengthwise slice of watermelon, curving upward at both ends. Then it has lateral curves that run from gunwale to gunwale; they are convex, like the curve of a hog's back or a high-crowned roadway, and are known as camber. Finally, it has vertical curves for its ribs, which start at the keel and then curve upward to shape the ship's bottom and sides. But it is not enough to allow for sheer, camber, and vertical curvature. Just as a fish has a head and a tail, so a ship has a bow and stern. These are curved structures, as we all know — the bow coming to a triangular point at the ship's headstern, often with flaring reverse curves; the stern rounded like a receding chin, dropping away from deck level down to the sternpost and propeller.

Sound complicated? You can bet that it jolly well is. It's difficult enough to build a new ship with all these curves, and have the parts fit together properly. But imagine the work in a ship repair yard, when a ship cones into drydock with its bow smashed from a collision, or a hole stove in its bottom from running aground on a rocky reef. Or, as happened not infrequently, when a war-damaged ship cones in, a great torpedo hole in its side. Then measurements have to be taken, and new structures designed to replace the damaged parts. If the design comes out of a hull drafting room, it reaches the Mold Loft as a blueprint. The Mold Loftsman — the great master craftsman of ship's hull workers — must lay the lines out full size on the loft floor, visualize the new structure in three dimensions, nail together a three-dimensional mock-up of thin wooden strips, and from that model make templates.

This was all new stuff to me, and obviously far outside of any experiences I ever had as a newspaperman. But I talked with the people who knew shipyard work, enlisted their ideas, and worked with them cooperatively. We built up a training staff, we experimented, we

innovated, we let our solutions develop in a practical way from our problems, and bit by bit we devised answers to our most pressing concerns. We taught our young shipfitters to read blueprints in classroom situations. Then instructors out in the yard showed learners how to turn blueprints into fabricated steel parts. Much of the shipfitting work given beginners was simple in nature — new ammunition racks, for example, or strengthening the foundation of a ship's stern section in order to mount an anti-submarine gun. And the interior compartmentation work, being relatively rectangular, was fairly easy.

I've used shipfitting as an illustrative example. In our training program we had also to deal with a score of other crafts. Marine electrical work was one of our big problems. Just as we taught shipfitters to read blueprints, so we had to teach electrical learners enough theoretical knowledge of electricity so that they could learn to make all the different kinds of electrical hook-ups, including three-way and four-way switches. We had a specially equipped laboratory which my staff devised, in which we had lighting fixtures and switches mounted on wooden boards for practice. We also had steel bulkheads in this room, and showed our learners how to use an electric drill to mount a fixture on a steel background. After the United States entered the war, Maryland Drydock was given more and more Navy outfitting contracts, and in consequence our electrical work increased enormously.

Since I cannot cover everything in this brief account, let me skip to the subject of training women to became shipyard mechanics. Beginning in 1943 our local Selective Service boards, pressed for more manpower for military duty, began reclassifying and drafting a great many of our brightest young male learners, the ones we had taught to read hull blueprints, to do electrical work, to develop the geometrical shapes for sheet metal ventilating ducts, and so on. We argued that we needed their skills in our defense work, but were told to hire women instead. Our management feared that women could not learn our kind of work, which varied from ship to ship and required the ability to figure out a constant succession of new mechanical problems. The building yards could train women

because their work was repetitive in nature, constructing the sane identical ship over and over. But our work required outstanding versatility as well as manual skills.

Anyway, the women were hired — hundreds and hundreds of them, and eventually 2,000 or more. I recruited for our training staff a woman psychologist I knew. She was Margaret Gaskill, a Vassar graduate, and she was out on the ships with the women workers, dressed as they were in blue cover-alls, figuring out answers to their problems. By this time we had worked out effective training patterns for male workers, so we had a fairly good idea what to do. We put the women into crafts not requiring great muscular strength. We used them as electric welders, as shipfitter helpers, as sheet metal workers, and especially, and in very large numbers, as electricians. In addition to our classroom training in electrical work, we organized our women electrical learners into on-the-job school gangs. In addition to a male instructor, we had three competent male mechanics in each such group, all four helping to train nine women. The women would start out as helpers to the men. There would come a day when a woman worker would be told to bring in her own toolbox and to work independently, with another woman learner helping her. This pattern, arrived at after some experimentation, worked effectively. There came a time, the last winter of the war, when a whole fleet of naval auxiliary vessels being outfitted for the Pacific war had all their electrical lighting installed by our female school gangs on the night shift. It was so cold on those unheated ships that winter that our girls wore up to eight layers of clothing. But their morale was high, and they got the job done.

In shipfitting and in sheet metal work we also had good success with women mechanics. In shipfitting our school gangs for women specialized on ammunition racks, gun mounts, and other jobs which were pretty much the same from ship to ship. But they also took on some large and complicated assignments. I happened one day to observe a huge gantry crane lowering a new pilot house on the deck of a Liberty ship being converted to a Navy supply ship. On the deck stood one of our shipfitter girls, little Jonnie Martin from Alabama, blueprint in hand, directing the operation while a gang of brawny riggers followed her commands. Again and again, Jonnie had the crane lift the house and try again, the riggers

with their chains and winches pulling it into position. Finally she was satisfied, the riggers loosened their equipment, and the welders stepped forward to fasten the structure to the ship. What struck me about the whole scene was the unquestioning way the men accepted the authority of this little slip of a girl. They were muscular men and knew their jobs, but she was the boss because she knew what the blueprint called for.

There came a time in the spring of 1945 when I could see that my work at Maryland Drydock was coming to an end. The war was nearly over. The Germans were being driven back on two fronts; the island-hopping in the Pacific was moving our amphibious forces closer and closer to Japan's bare islands. I began writing letters, making new contacts, and being interviewed for postwar positions. As I shall tell in the next chapter, I found what I was looking for in Washington, and accepted a position with the Department of State. After spending part of each week on liberal leave from the shipyard while I used the time to learn about the U. S. Foreign Service, there came a day in late July which I devoted to visiting all parts of the Maryland Drydock operation, from the shops on shore to the most distant ships at outfitting piers. It was my time for saying goodbye, and I was quite sentimental about leaving. I shook many a grimy and calloused hand that day, for after four years I had care to know more than a thousand of our yard employees by first names and they had come to know me. American industrial workers, I had learned, were a pretty fine group of people — earnest, hard-working, cooperative, and strongly aware of their responsibilities. I well knew that many a worker I said goodbye to that day, and this was especially true of our foremen and supervisors, had worked his heart out during the war years, sixty, seventy, even eighty hours a week; they had worked week-days, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, often until late at night. Their spirit was one I admired enormously and I was proud to have been associated with them.

I learned a great deal from my shipyard experiences — how to understand individuals whose background was often quite different from my own, how to work cooperatively with a variety of people and in turn to obtain their cooperation, how to fit my personal efforts into the framework of a large organization, how to learn from my shipyard colleagues

whose expertise I needed, and how to organize a staff of my own and supervise it successfully. One of the books I had read at Harvard was particularly valuable to me — The Functions of the Executive, by Chester I. Barnard. From it I learned that authority — effective authority — is never delegated downward from the superior to the subordinate, but always upward, from the subordinate to the superior; that no executive has any real authority except that which is recognized by the people who work under him and who freely grant it to him. I learned also the proper nature of decision — that some decisions are positive and creative and some are routine, but that the most important decisions are negative. By this terminology Barnard means decisions not to decide, but to hold up, obtain more information, and make sure of one's ground. Most successful executives make more negative decisions than any other kind, for if one delays action and studies a decision, it will be wiser in the end and quite possibly need not be made at all.

Before going to work in industry, I had been responsible for my own work as a journalist, but not for the work of others. The four years of immensely difficult and strenuous work I had at the Maryland Drydock Company were a necessary preparation for my next career, that with the U.S. Department of State and Foreign Service. I had already learned a great deal about being an organizational operator and executive. Now I needed to apply these lessons on a vastly more important stage.

Starting With the State Department

The Scene Shifts to Washington

Friends of mine have often expressed amazement that I should move to the United States Department of State from a position training shipyard workers. I suppose it does sound unlikely, but actually I was better fitted for my government responsibilities in Washington than I had been four years earlier for my war work for the Maryland Drydock Company, which had required enormously difficult adjustments.

What happened was that I started looking for a new job in the spring of 1945 when I could see that our work for the Navy was tapering off rapidly. The Navy had laid extensive plans to defeat Japan, and those plans were substantially completed when yards like ours completed our outfitting contracts and delivered the ships. There were various things I could do next. I could stay in industrial personnel work, in which after four years I had earned a certain reputation; I could return to newspaper journalism; or I could return to the ambition I had had before the war, to enroll at Harvard or some other large university and attempt an academic career.

As things worked out, I did none of these things. I was offered a position at Harvard as director of the University News Office, on the recommendation of Louis Lyons of the Nieman Foundation. In fact, I was offered the job a second time at a higher salary when President James B. Conant thought I was being reluctant. But something very interesting turned up in Washington. Through friends I was introduced to the Department of State's Office of Foreign Service, which was striving to recruit an individual with suitable experience to plan a postwar in-service training program for Foreign Service officers. I was interviewed by an attractive young career diplomat by the name of Alan N. Steyne. We clicked like magic. The more he talked about plans, the more exciting the job seemed and the more we exchanged ideas, the more pleased Steyne and I were with each other. There were formalities involved, of course. Steyne's superior, an officer named Selden Chapin who was Director of the Office of the Foreign Service, had to approve me. And I had to undergo a background and security investigation. But Steyne seemed very sure that I was the man he was looking for, and I was equally sure that I wanted the job.

I had one important question to ask, and it was answered promptly in the affirmative. I knew very little about the Foreign Service, and it was essential that I be sent abroad to study its operations and meet and talk with its people. Could this be arranged? Of course, Steyne assured me. He would have Chapin employ me at first in the Foreign Service Auxiliary, a temporary wartime personnel category with no Civil Service or other formal

requirements. Then I could be sent out to visit a number of embassies and consulates. I could go first to some nearby Latin American posts, such as those in Mexico and Cuba. Later on OFS (as Chapin's Office was called in the Department's shorthand) would wish to send me to Western Europe, to be familiarized with the large and complex London and Paris embassies. Steyne also thought I should go to Cairo, which was the headquarters for a number of specialists covering various aspects of economics and politics in the Middle East.

It was explained to me carefully that what OFS had eventually in mind was to set up some kind of staff college in the Foreign Service, similar to those which the Armed Forces had always operated in the military services. This staff college would give career officers of the Foreign Service advanced in-service training at various stages of their careers, and it would arrange for many of them to be trained in specialized aspects of Foreign Service work, such as international economics and finance, aviation matters, petroleum developments, agricultural economics, and labor affairs. A candidate was already in mind to head this staff college, a former State Department executive who was then on the faculty at Princeton University. But he was a man in his sixties, wise and scholarly rather than young and imaginative, and Steyne and Chapin thought that someone my age with practical experience in setting up and operating training programs would be needed to function as his deputy. OFS already was operating short courses to prepare new officers and clerical personnel for field duty, but the whole idea of advanced and specialized training later on was a relatively new concept.

My imagination was fired by the thought that I could help bring a great deal of new life and new expertise into the Department of State and Foreign Service, and participate in developing a splendid new diplomatic organization for the postwar period in which the United States would be playing a new leadership role in world affairs. I needed to learn a lot about the responsibilities of our career diplomatic personnel, and the exact work which they did both in Washington and in their overseas assignments. But I also felt that my educational experience had been extensive for a person my age (which was 37 that year)

and that I had learned a great deal in industry about how to set up training programs which would be practical and successful.

State Department and Foreign Service

At this point I had better explain to readers a rather complicated relationship, that between the State Department and the Foreign Service. The State Department in Washington, which in 1945 had about 3,500 employees, was our Cabinet department for dealing with foreign affairs. It was operated under the rules of the Federal Civil Service and staffed by permanent personnel who worked in Washington and were not subject to foreign duty. In addition, however, there were a hundred or so members of the Foreign Service who might at any given time be detailed to duty in the Department.

The Foreign Service was the Department's overseas branch, and was operated as a separate personnel system which in its structure resembled the Army and Navy. Young men and women were commissioned as Foreign Service Officers, or FSOs, in the bottom grades, just as young West Point graduates started out as second lieutenants and Annapolis graduates as ensigns. They would be assigned first to quite junior duties and responsibilities, usually as vice consuls or third secretaries, then gradually brought along and promoted from time to time as they gained experience. The great majority of FSOs were on foreign duty, but several dozen were needed in Washington, where they were usually placed in jobs requiring overseas diplomatic experience, or assigned to the various divisions of OFS which administered the Foreign Service. Overseas the Foreign Service included not only State Department types, but commercial, agricultural and labor attach#s whose Washington connections were with the Departments of Commerce, Agriculture, and Labor. The concept was that a single unified Foreign Service would do all the overseas reporting and other work of civilian Washington agencies. This unified service was administered by the State Department, which was, however, responsible to an inter-departmental body known as the Board of Foreign Service.

Like all bureaucratic arrangements, this one rarely worked exactly as it was supposed to. The Foreign Service Act of 1924 had brought the consular and diplomatic establishments into a single Foreign Service, and further legislation in 1939 had added the commercial and agricultural attach#s and other specialists working abroad for various Federal agencies. But by the time I entered government service there were many frictions and disagreements, and new legislation was under consideration to put the Foreign Service on a better basis for the postwar period. There were also at this point a number of temporary wartime agencies operating both in Washington and overseas which had to be liquidated. These included the Foreign Economic Administration, which had been engaged in economic warfare with the Axis powers; the Office of War Information, which had been carrying on an information and propaganda operation; and the Office of Strategic Services, which had been engaged both in wartime intelligence and in “special operations.”

The traditional State Department had a reputation for stodginess, and had been bypassed during the war when all these special agencies were created. In 1945, with the war grinding to a close, it was obvious that a completely new Department of State would be needed, with many new functions, and that a much improved and expanded Foreign Service would likewise be required. Thus the governmental situation relating to foreign affairs was in a state of transition, and was both chaotic and fluid, with no one sure just what was likely to happen.

The End of the War Years

To return to my personal story, I was sworn into the Foreign Service Auxiliary on July 30, 1945 at a salary which was equivalent to what I was supposed to get later in the Civil Service, that of a GS-14. Alan Steyne and I discussed the plan for me to proceed abroad for my educational tour, and it was decided that I would leave in about two weeks for Mexico City, where Ambassador George S. Messersmith was in charge. Messersmith had the reputation of being one of our most effective ambassadors, and Steyne, who had worked under him in Germany and knew him well, thought that his efficient embassy would

be a good place for me to begin. I spent the intervening time learning as much as I could about the Department of State, reading various analytical reports on the Foreign Service which Steyne gave me, talking to as many of my new colleagues as I could, and sitting in on some of the classes for new personnel being operated by the Division of Training Services.

I should explain more fully who Chapin and Steyne were. They were both Foreign Service officers of career — FSOs — who were on Washington assignments. Chapin had come most recently from the Paris embassy, where he had served as a Counselor with the rank of Minister, the number two position under Ambassador Jefferson Caffery. Steyne was younger and served as a special assistant to Chapin. He had come most recently from the London embassy and was a specialist in economic reporting, a field in which he had won an outstanding reputation. Brilliant and imaginative, he was Chapin's best idea man, and was working at a dozen different projects to improve the quality of the Foreign Service. There were six divisions of OFS which reported to Chapin. These had to do with Foreign Service planning, administration, personnel operations, training, reporting activities, and operation of buildings abroad.

Celebrating VJ Day

Two days before I was to leave for Mexico City, I spent the day in Washington, having commuted by train from Baltimore as usual in order to complete my travel preparations. I was to have dinner with Steyne at the nearby Metropolitan Club that evening and obtain his final instructions. This led to a memorable experience which I shall describe to conclude this chapter and to mark the beginning of my new career with the State Department and Foreign Service.

Because Steyne followed the usual State Department custom of working long hours, he would not be ready to go to dinner until 7 o'clock. I waited for him in the lounge of the old State Department building next door to the White House, now known as the Executive

Office Building. Washington was agog that day with tension and excitement, for every one knew that American surrender demands had been transmitted to Japan through neutral channels and that an answer could come back at any time.

Some time after 6 p.m. I suddenly became aware of a pandemonium of sound coming into our building from Pennsylvania Avenue outside. It was a great blaring of automobile horns, tooting like mad. It could mean only one thing — that the Japanese had given in to American surrender terms, and that the news had been picked up on automobile radios. World War II was over! Victory had come at last, and millions of servicemen would be coming home.

I walked to the front of our building and looked out on a very over-active street scene. Auto horns were tooting crazily and making a terrific racket. Many people were on foot, running along the sidewalk in the direction of the White House. There were hundreds and hundreds of them, suddenly appearing from all directions. There seemed to be a common impulse to stage a dramatic victory celebration. I thought I might as well join the fun, so walked down the steps of our building and followed the crowd along Pennsylvania Avenue to the point opposite the north portico of the White House where a great throng was rapidly forming along the guarded picket fence of the presidential property.

The crowd shouted for the President, and in a few minutes Mr. Truman appeared on the north portico and waved. There was more yelling and a great clapping of hands. The mood was of euphoric intoxication.

“We want to see Bess,” someone shouted, and the crowd took up the chant. The President waved, went back inside, and a few moments later reappeared with Mrs. Truman, who joined him in waving to the crowd, and blew them kisses. Still the crowd was not satisfied. It kept growing larger and making more noise. Finally Mr. and Mrs. Truman, accompanied by Secret Service guards, came down the steps. They walked across the White House

grass, then along the fence, smiling and shaking hands. There were thousands of outreached hands as everyone strained to touch them, even if only with finger tips.

I watched all this for some time, fascinated. As I stood there, I thought to myself, by God, this is wonderful. For four years my country has been engaged in a colossal world war, the greatest military conflict of human history. Now the war is over. The victory has been won. And I am attending a great spontaneous celebration, not just with ordinary people, but with my President! What a marvelous moment, a moment to treasure always a glamorous memory.

And then on to dinner with Alan, on to an evening spent working my way by trolley through the crowded streets to Union Station, onto a train for Baltimore to be with my family, and two days later, onto Mexico City. My new career had begun just as the sun was rising on the postwar world. And I was to be part of America's role in that world for the next twenty-three years.

First Impressions of the Foreign Service

The Embassy at Mexico City

Two days after the Japanese surrender I boarded an Eastern Air Lines plane that connected in Brownsville — then as now a small city on the Texas side of the Rio Grande — with a Pan-American flight to Mexico City. Both flights were in DC-3's, two-motored planes which carried 21 passengers and flew at low altitudes, between 4,000 and 6,000 feet. Our first flight made frequent stops, including Atlanta, New Orleans, and Houston. The passenger terminals at each stop were small frame buildings. It was my first air flight and far more enjoyable than flying high above the clouds in today's huge airliners. We could see everything below us with great clarity — the farmers tilling their fields, the cattle and other livestock grazing, the houses and barns, the villages and towns connected by

ribbons of highways along which tiny automobiles sped. Never having flown before, I was fascinated and completely charmed. What a marvelous way to travel, I thought.

It took us all day to get to Brownsville in late afternoon, and then we had to wait until dark for our Mexico City flight to take off. Later I learned that it was considered dangerous to fly over the Mexican highlands in the afternoon hours, for the bright sun beating down on the heated earth caused vertical currents of air — updrafts and dawn-drafts — which made planes uncontrollable at times. Night flying was relatively smooth, and we landed safely about midnight. A limousine deposited me about 1 a.m. at the Hotel Geneva, located on a broad avenue in a pleasant residential section of the Mexican capital. I was glad to get a night's sleep before visiting the nearby American embassy and obtaining my first glimpse of the Foreign Service.

Despite the cordial relationships I had developed with Steyne, Chapin, and others in Washington, I was not at all sure that the career FSOs I was about to meet would be glad to see me, for this was a different environment. I was acutely aware that I was an outsider, wholly new to the US diplomatic establishment and with no background to speak of in foreign affairs. My stereotype of the Foreign Service was that it was made up of proud, aloof people, products of New England prep schools and Ivy League colleges. I was not lacking in self-confidence, but thought it quite possible that my appearance might be regarded as a disagreeable intrusion and that I might have some difficulty establishing rapport for the first few days. My background in newspaper work and industry seemed to me unlikely to inspire much respect.

These were the thoughts passing through my mind that first morning in Mexico City as I walked slowly around the block from my hotel to the embassy, gathering my thoughts and thinking carefully just how I might best explain my mission and what I hoped to accomplish. I had been told by Steyne to ask first for the Administrative Officer, Carl W. Strom, and in a few minutes I was ushered into the presence of a rather solemn man in his forties who greeted me cordially but, I thought, with a certain wariness. My first impression

of Strom was that he was prematurely bald, used the English language in a rather precise, school-teacherish manner, and seemed quite stiff. Later I was to learn that he was the son of a Norwegian Lutheran pastor in Minnesota, had taught Greek and mathematics at his Alma Mater, Luther College in Iowa, had a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, and had served for three years as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. I was also to learn later that his doctoral field was mathematics, but that he was a great Shakespeare enthusiast who knew by heart all the most famous speeches and sonnets, that when traveling he carried with him always a copy of the Greek New Testament to read at odd moments, that he was very fond of music and all the performing arts, and that he was a warm-hearted and friendly man with a delightful sense of humor. Not much of this came through at first acquaintance, however, and I would have been astonished if it had been predicted to me that this solemn and scholarly man was to become for the next twenty-three years my warmest and closest friend in the Foreign Service.

Strom did his best in our first conversation to put me at ease, saying that he had enough confidence in Chapin and others in OFS to feel certain that they would not send on such a mission as mine a man who was not qualified to be of meaningful assistance to the Foreign Service. He assured me that everyone in the Embassy knew of my expected arrival, and that everyone was prepared to receive me cordially and to help me learn about the Service. When Strom and I exchanged biographical information about personal backgrounds we soon found we had much in common. Among the facts on my side which helped were the fact that my grandfather was a Protestant clergyman, that I had studied Greek in college and could quote from the gospels in that language, and that I had lived in Minnesota and traveled in Iowa and South Dakota. Conversely, I was delighted, of course, to find myself chatting with such a highly educated man, whose scholarly interests overlapped with my own; and the more I saw of him the more I admired and liked him.

Strom's first duty was to take me to pay my respects to Ambassador Messersmith. Having never before met an Ambassador, I looked at him with considerable interest as he greeted me. He was a man about sixty, of medium height, very dapperly dressed with a silvery

edge to his waistcoat and a red carnation in his lapel. If memory serves me correctly, he wore pince-nez attached to his coat by a long black ribbon. He had a great deal of presence and oozed dignity and authority. He asked Strom to leave me with him for a bit, and then questioned me closely as to my desires and what I had in mind. I needed, I told him, to understand just as thoroughly as was humanly possible what the people of the Foreign Service were like, what their ideas were on the improvements needed for the postwar years, and exactly what duties each person performed and for what purposes. His embassy had been selected for introductory study because of the reputation he had in Washington for running a highly effective diplomatic mission. The Ambassador listened attentively to my little speech and seemed to approve of what I said. All right, he said finally, he thought I had come to the right place, and he would pass the word on to his staff to cooperate with me. He recommended that I spend several weeks in the embassy proper, studying the work of each section, and then travel around Mexico a bit to visit several consulates. I should work closely with Strom, a sound officer who would be a helpful guide. Strom should bring me to the weekly staff meetings which the Ambassador held on Monday afternoon for this would be a good way to gain an insight into embassy operations and responsibilities.

When I reported back to Strom and told him of my interview, he said that obviously I had made a satisfactory first impression and laid the proper foundation for my study. He then took me on a tour of the Embassy, introducing me to the chiefs of the principal sections — political, economic, and consular. Later he would take me to two parts of the Embassy housed outside the main building. One was the visa office, two blocks away; the other was the economic and commercial section, located a mile away on a main street leading to the center of the city. Strom said that I could start with the administrative section, which he himself headed, and that he would explain as best he could how the whole mission operated. He assigned me an office next to his own, complete with typewriter, and to make me feel more welcome suggested we should start out on first-name terms.

In this friendly atmosphere Strom and I had several long and intimate talks over the next few days, and when Sunday came he invited me to visit his home in Chapultepec Hills and meet his family. I learned many things from Strom very quickly. Career FSOs were not snobbish, he said, but often a bit leery of newcomers and outsiders because they had come to feel neglected and unfairly treated by the system. Under wartime conditions a large number of Foreign Service Auxiliary people had been added to the Service to perform additional duties, mostly of a specialized economic nature. These men had been employed by the Department at the current rates of pay for professional people, and tended to have much higher salaries than FSOs. Yet the latter had been selected by a very rigorous examination system, on the presumption that they represented the highest quality of Americans available, with outstanding abilities. Strom himself, a Ph.D. who had been a Rhodes Scholar, had entered the Service in 1935, after three years on the waiting list, yet had been infrequently promoted and was still at a base salary of only $4,500 — a figure which I was embarrassed to note, because it was $2,000 less than the Department was paying me. There was a great deal of tension between the regular Foreign Service and the members of the Auxiliary, but Strom felt that the Auxiliary people were needed and that many were fully as capable as their FSO colleagues. A lot of the jealousy and resentment would disappear, he said, if only the Department would raise FSO salaries and provide more promotions.

Strom told me briefly about his own career. He had served in Vancouver and Zurich, assigned to consular duties, then had had a tour doing administrative work in the Department. He had been in Mexico for two years, and at the age of 45 still had not had an opportunity to perform political and economic work — the substantive work of diplomacy which had originally attracted him into the Service. When I asked him for his objective evaluation of what he had seen so far, he said that he liked the Foreign Service and that he had found that it contained many superior individuals. On the other hand, he thought that many officers were of only mediocre ability and that a few were of such inferior calibre that they should be weeded out. This was particularly true of some of the

old commercial specialists who had been blanketed in when State took over responsibility for trade promotion work. There were also some mediocre officers who had become FSOs by the “back door” route. This was the loophole that permitted clerical employees to become career officers after five years of subordinate duty without going through the whole examination procedure; they could be approved solely on the basis of an oral examination. Such officers, Strom told me, tended to be industrious and useful rather than intellectual or imaginative. They were not likely to be promoted to the top ranks of the Service.

Analyzing Foreign Service Problems

As I worked away over the next several weeks, interviewing every American employee individually and chatting also with some of the non-Americans, I kept careful notes on each person's education and background. At the end of each day I pounded my typewriter for several hours, putting on paper for future reference interesting facts and opinions that I had collected. This was also to be my procedure later on when my orientation tour was extended to Europe and the Middle East.

I found that it was extremely fruitful to discuss my initial impressions with Carl Strom, as our acquaintance ripened into friendship. I might leap ahead of my story at this point and say that this impressive officer, so stingily treated and exploited in the first ten years of his Foreign Service career, was later to be recognized for his quite extraordinary intelligence and ability. In his final years as an FSO he became the acting chief of our diplomatic mission in Korea for over a year, then Ambassador to Cambodia and after that Ambassador to Bolivia. There is an old saying that merit will eventually be rewarded, and the Strom story had a happy ending.

After interviewing a goodly portion of the Embassy officers and discussing my tentative reactions with Strom, I sat down and wrote a report to Chapin, telling him all that I had been doing and what my initial conclusions were. One thought that I had was that those

FSOs who had come into the Service by the examination route immediately after college graduation were less impressive than their colleagues who had made their livings in other ways for a few years before turning to diplomacy. Another was that consular and administrative duties, in which officers dealt every day with practical problems, provided a lot better training than sitting in a political section writing analytical reports based largely on newspaper stories. It was a well-known fact in the Foreign Service that political reporting and contact work was more generously rewarded in future assignments and promotions than any other type of work, but when I looked at some of the reports being produced it seemed to me that any experienced newspaper man could do as well or better. In short, the best rewards came from doing the easiest work, whereas officers struggling with consular problems, far more difficult in nature, tended to be overlooked and neglected.

I also took the opportunity in my letter to Chapin to praise Strom and recommend that he be brought back to Washington to work on plans for improving the Foreign Service. I received in response a cordial note from Chapin in which he assured me that Strom was already very much under consideration for the new Division of Foreign Service Planning. Chapin also seemed favorably impressed with the ideas I had developed, and instructed me to extend my tour and before returning to Washington to spend some time at the American Embassy in Havana, Cuba.

It was easy to make friends, I found, among the embassy officers, who seemed pleased that someone from Washington was interested in them. Soon I was being invited out to parties where I could socialize with both Americans and Mexicans and where I could also meet representatives of other diplomatic missions in Mexico City. I also was able to take a number of out-of-town trips with embassy officers. One was to Puebla, Mexico's fourth largest city, with the officer handling civil aviation affairs. Another was to Cuernavaca, where I went out with one of the vice consuls on what was called a protection case, having to do with the welfare of American citizens. This case was interesting enough to describe in these pages. Two middle-aged American schoolteachers, both widows, had driven down into Mexico on a sightseeing tour. Along the way they had picked up two handsome

young Mexicans, who traveled with them for several days. But the young gigolos, if I may use such a term, were playing a game of their own. One evening they lured the American women out to a lonely spot “to see a beautiful sunset.” When the Americans got out of their car, the Mexicans produced a gun, pumped bullets into them, then appropriated the car and departed for parts unknown. One woman was fatally shot, but the other was only wounded and was hospitalized in Cuernavaca. The vice consul whom I accompanied was there to get the full story from the local police, recover the baggage of the deceased victim, check on the hospitalized survivor, and insist to authorities that the criminals must be apprehended and brought to justice. I found the whole affair fascinating.

Visiting Consulates in Mexico

Soon after this I was able to visit two outlying consulates, those at Mazatlan and Guadalajara. I traveled with the assistant naval attach# for air and his enlisted-man co-pilot in a two-motored Beechcraft plane; they were delivering pouches and making routine inspections. Mazatlan was a small seaport on the Gulf of Mexico, but the harbor was so badly silted up that the port had little remaining importance. The consul and vice-consul there were doing routine work, issuing visas, invoicing shipments of winter vegetables to U.S. destinations, and looking out for a few tourists who came down from California. Guadalajara, on the other hand, seemed quite a busy and important city, Mexico's third largest. It was in the mountains, but at a lower and more comfortable altitude than Mexico City, 6,000 feet against 7,500. It was a pleasant city with a mild climate and had the reputation of being one of the Foreign Service's most desirable posts. The Navy lieutenant, the co-pilot and I enjoyed sitting in open-air cafes and being serenaded by an endless succession of mariachi street bands who played haunting Mexican folk melodies of a highly nostalgic nature. It was Mexico at its most charming. The consul there was an up-and-coming man of 43 with a handle-bar moustache who was much excited by my visit. He wanted to get out a set of blueprints and convince me why he needed additional rent

money to acquire more office space. When I explained apologetically that I was not a Foreign Service inspector and had no authority over such matters, he was disappointed.

“Sorry, I just mistook the purpose of your visit,” he said wearily as he folded up his blueprints. “But when I heard you were from the Department, I was hoping I could make some hay. Damn it all, Hopkins, I've been in the Foreign Service fifteen years now, and I have yet to lay eyes on an inspector!”

We were taken to lunch at the consul's home that day, the lieutenant and I. It was in a suburb some miles from the city proper, and all the houses were surrounded by adobe mud walls that reminded me of Taos and Santa Fe. Our host stopped and unlocked a heavy wooden door in one of these walls. A moment later we were warmly greeted by a bouncy blonde lady, the consul's wife, who said what sounded to me like “Welcome to Tlocky-Pocky!” I found out later what she meant; the name of the suburb was Tlaquepaque. Their home turned out to be absolutely delightful. It was built on the old Roman plan, a hollow quadrangle with an open patio and fountain in the center. Mr. and Mrs. James Henderson, for that was their name, had served in posts in Syria and Latvia from which they had brought many beautiful objects they were now enjoying in a Mexican setting. It was interesting to see one of the more glamorous aspects of life in the Foreign Service.

Next morning we flew back to Mexico City with the hot sun beating down on us, and I got a demonstration of why one doesn't fly over the Mexican highlands after midday. Toward noon our light plane began bucking and bouncing around as vertical air currents hit it, and it was all our two pilots could do to hold it on course. We landed in a heavy sweat, in which I shared fully. It felt good to be on the ground again.

Back in Mexico City I continued interviewing members of the Embassy staff and learning about the Foreign Service. I talked with the supervising Consul General for Mexico, Maurice L. Stafford, a tall man of distinguished appearance, originally from St. Joseph,

Missouri, and he told me that there were nineteen consulates in Mexico. Seven were along the country's border with the United States, and the other twelve were located either in seaports or at important inland mining and manufacturing centers. There are many fewer today, but the consulates in Mexico had been important during World War II as centers from which to combat the extensive Axis anti-Allied propaganda and from which also to carry out programs of economic warfare involving strategic minerals, such as Mexican mercury, which the Nazis were seeking to import.

Stafford's deputy, Forrest K. Geerken, handled miscellaneous consular duties, one of which was to keep track of the estates of American citizens dying in Mexico and see that their effects were recovered for their families in the United States. He took me one day into a locked storage room of the Embassy and showed me an impressive stack of trunks, suitcases, duffle bags, golf clubs, and other minor property collected from deceased Americans. It was all waiting to be claimed by relatives.

“Here, hold out your hand,” he said to me as he picked up a rubber sack and untied the drawstring. He poured a pinch of grey powder into my palm.

“What is it?” I asked, drawing back apprehensively.

“These are the ashes of a lady from Michigan who died here recently. Her last wishes were that her body should be cremated and the ashes distributed by a plane flying at 5,000 feet over Cuernavaca. I am negotiating now for a pilot to carry out this mission.”

Other consular employees in Mexico City were working either on passports, citizenship problems, and the needs of American citizens, or on the very extensive workload of visa applications from Mexicans seeking to travel or study in the United States or to immigrate permanently. I saw long lines of visa applicants waiting in the street outside the visa office — a sight which was to greet me for the next several months in every country which I visited. I carefully interviewed the officers handling consular matters and then worked my way through the economic and political sections as well, learning a great deal about the

Mexican economy, about trade promotion work, and about the political developments which were being reported by the three FSOs assigned to this work.

A Day with the Ambassador

Where I learned most about problems in Mexican-American political and economic relationships was in the Ambassador's weekly staff meetings, which I attended regularly. Messersmith kept his staff fully informed on his conversations with high officials in Washington, with whom he talked frequently by telephone, and also those he had with the Mexican President and his cabinet ministers. He used his staff meetings to instruct all embassy section chiefs on exactly what he thought about important issues and impending events. He was an authoritative person and expressed his ideas with emphatic clarity.

After one of these meetings, the Ambassador asked me how my study was progressing. When I responded favorably, he suggested that perhaps it was time for me to get first-hand information on the work of an ambassador. I should report to his office next morning, and he would let me sit in the background with my notebook and observe his activities while he went about his daily business.

So I came in next day, sat at a little side table which had been set up for me, and for several hours watched and listened. A number of embassy officers came in from time to time to report on some matter they were handling, or to ask for further instructions. There were many telephone calls, some from Mexican officials, some from American business leaders, some from embassy officers. Three different secretaries came in during the day and took dictation on letters and political reports the Ambassador was sending to Washington. Some of these were long and detailed; Messersmith was not called in the Department of State “forty-page George” without reason.

The principal thing on the Ambassador's mind that morning was coffee prices. He telephoned the Mexican desk officer in the Department of State, John Willard Carrigan, and arranged with him to set up an important dinner meeting at the Metropolitan Club

three weeks hence. Every Cabinet officer with any responsibility for commodity prices and international trade was to be invited, and each was to be told not to send a substitute as a policy matter of great importance to our relations with Latin American countries was to be discussed. Messersmith then explained to me what the problem was. The wartime Office of Price Administration was still holding down coffee prices set during the war, and the level was so low that the coffee producers in Latin American countries were losing money on every shipment. It was imperative to our relations with our Western Hemisphere neighbors that coffee prices be allowed to rise. Did I have any comment or questions?

“You certainly know how to get things done in Washington,” I ventured. “But where does Mexico fit in? I didn't realize that this country was a major coffee producer.”

“That's not the point. Mexico has less coffee to sell than Brazil or Colombia. But all Latin America is suffering because of our rigid price policies. The Department is not giving this matter the attention it deserves, so I must go to Washington and force through a change of policy.”

I made appropriately admiring remarks, and then continued to take notes as the Ambassador went through a busy day. I began to think after a while that this was not an average day, but one which Messersmith had carefully chosen in order to put on a dramatic show for my benefit.

Finally in late afternoon the Ambassador dismissed his last caller, tipped his chair back, and began to ask me questions about my impression of the Embassy. I said that I had found it admirably organized and managed and that I had been favorably impressed by the quality of the officers I had interviewed. Many officers had talked to me frankly about their personal views on the Service, and I had learned a great deal from them. But I was troubled, I said, by the morale problems I had found. Many officers seemed to be neglected by the Department and underpaid. It appeared to me a shame there could not be more promotions. Why couldn't Strom, for example, a 45-year-old former Rhodes

Scholar with a Ph.D. degree and a fine record, be promoted to a higher class? He was eight years older than I, but was getting less salary.

“You are absolutely right,” said the Ambassador. “Fine officer. Backbone of the Service. I've told Washington that it is exploiting the loyalty of our very best people. I must get back to this problem and push much harder.”

Messersmith went on to say that in recent years the Department of State had not been staffed properly on the highest levels. He himself had served as Assistant Secretary for Administration, but had been succeeded by a weak administrator who had let things run downhill during the war. It was now high time that the Department be reorganized and strengthened.

When I got up to leave, I had a sudden impulse and made a little speech. I told Ambassador Messersmith that the day had been very valuable to me not only for what I had learned about ambassadorial responsibilities, but for what I had learned about him as an individual. He was, I told him, a very different person from the one his staff thought he was.

“What do you mean? Explain yourself, young man.”

“Well, Mr. Ambassador, your subordinates in the Embassy are very much in awe of you. You are an authoritative person. You lay down the policy lines, you give orders, and you are tough about expecting compliance. Every one thinks you are a difficult man to work for.”

“They do, eh? And what do you think?”

“I think that you want your staff to think you are a tough boss, but that down inside you are a sentimentalist. You are deeply concerned about the people who work under you. You are fond of them and you try to look out for them, but you don't want them to know it. What

you feel about people is quite different from what you show on the surface. Down inside you are a very warm person."

Messersmith looked at me in some astonishment, not quite sure how to deal with this cheeky comment. Then his face relaxed into a guarded smile.

"Well, that's an impertinent comment, Hopkins, a very impertinent comment. I don't think anyone ever made such a statement to me. But you are perceptive, and you may be right. Now get out of here before I say something I shouldn't!"

When I told Carl Strom about this conversation next day, he was both amazed and amused.

"I think you're absolutely right," he said. "Underneath all that plate armor of austerity, Messersmith does care about people. I like him very much, myself; wouldn't want to work for a better man. But I would never dare tell him so. He would think I was trying to flatter him, and he would take my head off. But you are a visitor, so you can get away with the remark you made. You found the chink in his armor, and he may not like that. But I daresay that you've won his respect."

Some More Impressions

In addition to Strom, there were several other officers in Mexico City whom I came to like, and some have remained friends of mine in all the years since. But I also met some who seemed to me to have strange values, not at all in harmony with my own. They were over-impressed with the importance of protocol, rank, and privilege, for example, and antagonistic toward the Auxiliary officers who did not, in their view, have the proper respect for diplomatic tradition.

I shall tell one story. One evening a group of us in the political section of the Embassy were chatting at quitting time, and one of them suggested we all go to his nearby

apartment for a drink, since his wife was away and he was temporarily alone. While I was sipping my drink in his tastefully furnished living room, I noticed two framed photographs prominently displayed on his grand piano. I recognized them as the former King Carol of Romania, now living in exile as a refugee, and his morganatic wife Magda Lupescu. I asked my host if I were correct in my identifications.

He swelled with pride and admitted that I was indeed correct.

“Carol and Magda have become good friends of ours” he informed me. “We see them often.”

“Well, I suppose there's nothing wrong with your socializing with exiled royalty if you find them agreeable,” I commented. “But Carol and his wife are not particularly reputable people, and obviously have no present importance or political future. It strikes me as a little strange that you as an American diplomat, representing the policies and aspirations of the United States, would be so proud of knowing these has-beens that you would display their photographs prominently in your home. Do you really think it is fitting?”

My host looked a bit taken aback, and I was not invited to his home again. But I saw much during my visit which seemed to me lacking in the kind of seriousness which I wanted to see in the Foreign Service of future years. I noted, for example, that there was a great deal of partying in the Mexico City American community. The Embassy officers were kind enough to invite me to a number of receptions, where I met many pleasant people. But when I asked myself how seriously all this activity contributed to American diplomacy, I was troubled. For at eleven receptions which I attended, I noted the presence of Mexican nationals at only two. Almost all the guests were Americans or Europeans.

I stayed in Mexico altogether seven weeks. It was a fascinating experience for me. The Foreign Service people whose minds I explored in hundreds of interviews were quite different from what I expected. Only two or three FSOs with whom I talked had attended an Ivy League college, or had come from anything that one could call an elite social

background. Almost every one was from some different region or educational institution, and except for the total absence of blacks the Embassy staff as a whole seemed broadly representative of the American population. Several officers struck me as having superior abilities, and I met only one or two whom I thought inadequate for postwar responsibilities, if one allowed for the fact that much consular work was routine in nature and required diligence rather than high intelligence. Most officers spoke Spanish with reasonable fluency, but there were some who noticeably needed more language training. All in all, it seemed to me that Foreign Service people in the Mexican posts I visited were somewhat more than adequate for their responsibilities. The really bright spot was Strom; I thought him much superior to his colleagues, and he was the only officer I met on that trip who subsequently reached ambassadorial rank.

A Visit to Embassy Havana

Toward the end of September I decided that I had reached the point of diminishing returns in my study efforts and had better start back to Washington. I had one more consulate to visit, the one at Merida, in Yucatan, where I stopped off for two interesting days on my way to Cuba. The consul there, Steve Worster, was a sturdy, practical young man, brought up on a farm in Maine. He was alone in Merida, but seemed to have his job well under control. Yucatan was important to the US Navy during the war years because the henequen grown there produced fibers needed for making rope; it was a useful substitute for the hemp of the Philippines which was not available during the Japanese occupation. I was taken on a tour of the henequen fields and also of the decorticating plants where the fibers were extracted and processed for export to the United States. My schedule also permitted a brief visit to Uxmal, one of the nearby Mayan ruins so fascinating to archaeologists.

The American Embassy at Havana was smaller than the large establishment in Mexico City, was not as competently organized and managed, and struck me as having a less impressive staff. The Ambassador, R. Henry Norweb, was a product of the old

pre-1924 diplomatic service which emphasized social background, personal charm, and smooth manners. He was very curious about me, and when I told him how I had attended Messersmith's weekly staff meetings, he promptly invited me to attend one of his the very next day. When all the officers were assembled, Norweb asked each one to explain to me just what his job was, what he was accomplishing, and what problems he was encountering. This was exactly what I wanted, of course, and I took copious notes while the Ambassador, arms folded, listened proudly.

After the meeting, several officers approached me and thanked me warmly. What for? I asked. I was then informed that this was the only staff meeting that any one could recall the Ambassador ever calling. Each officer felt that for the first time he had had an opportunity to let Norweb know what went on in his particular section, and thus to get a little recognition. So I got credit for having boosted morale, and all my individual interviews from then on were particularly cordial. As in Mexico, I collected many case histories and added additional pages to my fat sheaf of typewritten notes. Some of the ideas I was given were useful, and I left after eight days feeling that I had made some new friends and had increased my understanding of Foreign Service functions and responsibilities.

After two months in Mexico and Cuba, I returned to Washington well satisfied with the beginning I had made. I still had seen only little corners of the Foreign Service, but the work and the personalities fascinated me. I could see many problems which required better personnel administration, including in-service training and career development. One of the most obvious was poor morale, due largely to inadequate communication between the management of the Service in Washington and officers working in the field. Most officers felt badly neglected, even forgotten, and wondered what the mysterious Department of State was like and what it expected of them. But I found them all profoundly human and genuinely friendly. I was already sure that I was going to like Foreign Service people, on all levels from ambassadors to clerks, very, very much.

The Middle East, London, and the Low Countries

A Visit to the Middle East

Upon returning to Washington, I was told by Chapin and Steyne that Foreign Service personnel plans, which included the proposed new staff college, were proceeding slowly and could not mature until new enabling legislation was passed by Congress. A special team was being organized in the Division of Foreign Service Planning to draft this legislation, and arrangements were in process to bring Carl Strom to Washington to be put in charge of this work. Meanwhile, OFS had been favorably impressed by the training plans I was putting on paper and thought that I should continue my educational tour. It would be a good idea, my mentors thought, for me to visit other geographic areas and see posts quite different in character from those I had studied in Mexico and Cuba.

This was sweet music to my ears, for I was keenly interested in seeing as much and learning as much as I possibly could. Plans were worked out for me to spend a week in Montreal in order to see a busy visa-issuing post, then to spend a month in Cairo and nearby posts in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine. After that I should spend a couple more months in Western Europe, studying especially the work of our two most important embassies, those in London and Paris. I made the Montreal trip in October, then early in November reported at the Washington Airport to take a DC-4 plane across the Atlantic to Cairo, with refueling stops at Stevensville, Newfoundland; Santa Maria, in the Azores; Casablanca, Morocco; and Tripoli, Libya. The flight was operated by the US Army's Air Transport Command and I flew on military orders arranged by the State Department. Commercial flights to Europe had not yet at that time been resumed.

The importance of Cairo lay in the fact that a number of economic specialists were stationed there who had regional responsibilities for much of the Arab world. They were concerned with such matters as petroleum production, civil aviation negotiations to obtain landing rights for American airlines, trade promotion, agricultural development, the disposition of leftover military supplies and equipment, and the beginnings of a Near East labor movement. There were also still remnants in Cairo of the Office of War Information

and the Foreign Economic Administration, both in process of liquidation. Responsibilities and operations were in a state of flux, and it was hoped that I could make some useful observations and recommendations on what the postwar Foreign Service should do about the leftover units.

Before leaving Washington I had spent several weeks writing additional papers for OFS. One of them dealt with introductory training for new FSOs. Another dealt at some length with the clerical and secretarial personnel of the Foreign Service — the indispensable subordinates without whom the officer personnel could not effectively function. I had seen and talked with code clerks, file room managers, secretaries, and administrative assistants, and had already reached the conclusion that they were not receiving the attention they deserved, either before leaving the Department or after arriving at embassies and consulates. This was a matter already much on the minds of Strom in Mexico City and his counterpart Richard F. Boyce in Havana.

For the most part, I wrote, we recruited well-qualified people, attracted to the Foreign Service by the glamorous prospect of traveling and living in foreign countries. They needed relatively little technical instruction in office skills, but far better orientation than they were receiving in what the Foreign Service was all about and what it was like to live in foreign countries and have social contacts with local people. They were going to be representatives of the United States abroad, regardless of their rank, and in a very personal way they would contribute to the impressions which foreigners have of the American way of life. So I outlined a Washington orientation program for all newly employed clerks and secretaries in which they would be psychologically prepared for life abroad and impressed with the responsibilities which they would have as emissaries of good will. I thought also that the administrative arrangements for their travel and their reception at foreign posts should be improved, so that every new employee would be met on arrival and carefully assisted to make initial living arrangements. My paper also proposed that officer personnel should be instructed to include their secretaries and other subordinates in Foreign Service social life, and that every officer should be judged in his

annual efficiency report on how well he dealt with the needs of the employees under his supervision.

During my time in Cairo I was glad I had written this paper, for I became quite interested in the subordinate personnel at the Legation there. Several Foreign Service girls who were stationed in Cairo had been recruited in Minnesota. It was easy to establish rapport with them on the basis of my own familiarity with the Twin Cities area, and I was invited to visit their apartments and see how they lived, groups of bachelor girls together. Later on I was to talk to the chief of the economic section of our embassy at Brussels who said to me, “Look, I have eight of the most competent economic officers anyone could wish for. But I don't have enough secretaries to type their reports, and I would gladly exchange any two of my officers for a bright girl who could run my file room efficiently!”

The flight to Cairo was a slow one by today's standards. We left Washington on a Friday morning, got to Newfoundland in the afternoon, spent the first night crossing the Atlantic, had breakfast in the Azores, and then dinner that evening in Casablanca. At each landing we were on the ground for some hours. The second night we flew across northern Africa, by this time demoted to smaller plane, a DC-3. We had breakfast in Tripoli, and after flying along the Mediterranean coast of Libya arrived at the Cairo airport in mid-afternoon. It was a thrill for me to look down on the long green ribbon of the Nile Valley as we passed over it and circled so that we could get a good view of the famous Pyramids at El Giza.

It was not nearly so thrilling to land at the airport on Sunday afternoon and be surrounded by Egyptians chattering in Arabic. There was no one from the American Legation to meet me, and in fact no Americans or British in sight. I finally managed to get a telephone call through to the Legation, and was told by the Egyptian employee on Sunday duty at the switchboard that I should come on into the city and register at famous Shepheard's Hotel, where a room would be engaged for me. Wasn't there an American duty officer? For I knew that there was supposed to be one. Well, yes, but he was spending the afternoon on the golf course. He would get in touch with me at Shepheard's.

The problem with this arrangement was that Shepheard's was filled up and had no space. When I called the Legation again, I was asked please to sit in the lobby until a hotel room could be found for me. I felt badly in need of a bath, after some 56 hours of travel, but whiled away the time pleasantly by joining a lonely British major for a drink in a corner of the lobby; he had come in from Suez for a little Sunday relaxation and was glad to have company. Several times I received telephone calls, including one from the duty officer, who apologized for not greeting me in person, muttering “Sunday afternoon, you know!” somewhat unconvincingly. Another call came from a more senior officer of the Legation, a first secretary serving as charg# d'affaires during the absence of the Minister Plenipotentiary, inviting me to join a group at his home for dinner. And finally the switchboard operator did find me a room in a rather stodgy hotel which seemed to be filled with British army officers.

At the Charg#'s home that evening I was received hospitably and plied with food and drink, but I was tired after my trip and not at my best. I remember that my hostess, having grown up in the Foreign Service, the daughter of a famous ambassador, was quite persistent in urging me to have the Department arrange things in such a way that officers on transfer would be moved into furnished quarters at each post and not have to bother with packing and unpacking their own furniture, transported long distances at Government expense. Responding to my host's excellent scotch highballs, I was not in a mood to take this idea seriously, and in a spirit of levity made a further suggestion — that each transferred officer not only inherit his predecessor's furnished quarters, but also his wife and family. Then each officer would be interested in replacing a colleague junior to himself, so that he could acquire a younger and prettier wife; and for the sake of that bonus, he would be willing to move downward in the Service to a lower rank and status. Counselors of embassy would became first secretaries, first secretaries second secretaries, consuls general would be denoted to consul and then on to vice consul. Eventually could have the whole Service running backward instead of forward. All the tension about promotions to higher ranks

would disappear, for each officer's thoughts would be concentrated on his prospects for a happy demotion.

At first everyone seemed baffled by this mischievous nonsense, but as I rambled on with elaborations my listeners caught on that I was just having fun and finally started laughing. They began to make further suggestions, and we wound up quite hilarious. Since I was billed as being from the sacred and sanctimonious Department of State, some of those present must have thought that the staid old Department was becoming a bit balmy in its old age.

The Cairo Legation

For the next several weeks my attention was riveted on the legation staff and what each person's duties and problems were. I had lengthy interviews with all American employees, a procedure which was helped along by the Legation's work hours — starting at 8 a.m., stopping at 1 p.m. for a three-hour lunch break, and resuming at 4 p.m. for three more hours. Each day I was invited home for luncheon by someone, usually an officer, and we could cover a lot of ground in a leisurely manner. Just as in Mexico and Cuba, I found FSOs not only willing to talk to me freely, but delighted to be able to unburden themselves to a visitor who would listen sympathetically to recitals of achievements and frustrations.

Thus I talked with a fiscal and accounting officer with a status-conscious East European wife who was eating his heart out in misery because the two of them were not on the diplomatic list; to an FSO administrative officer who hated his job and yearned to be assigned to political reporting; and to a commercial officer, also an FSO, who felt humiliated because the Minister had chosen a younger and lower-ranking political officer to be in charge of the Legation during his absence on home leave. This caused the Commercial officer's New Zealand-born wife to lose status in the eyes of the British official community. To make things worse, the Queen of Egypt was about to receive all the American Legation wives at the royal palace. The New Zealand wife wanted the British

Ambassador's wife, not the young wife of the American charg# d'affaires, to present the wives to the Queen at this reception, but no one would listen to her proposal.

And so it went. Along with the personal grievances of some officers I was impressed with the deep seriousness of others. Many had interesting jobs, in some cases taking them on trips to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and even Iran, and I learned a great deal from talking with them. I also had some personal visits to places of interest, including archeological digs at El Giza and a half day inspecting an oil-drilling site. I had many long walks through the streets of Cairo, observing the dirt and misery of a poverty-stricken populace, and even sampled a bit of night life to get my first sight of Middle Eastern belly dancing.

In the absence of the Minister I could not fully evaluate the Legation's effectiveness, but it seemed to me that each officer at Cairo was “doing his own thing” with little supervision and that there was a lack both of staff cohesion and administrative control. The contrast with Messersmith's tight organization in Mexico City could not have been sharper. The petroleum attach#, for example, had excellent relationships with American oil company representatives, who kept him well informed on all that was going on, but felt little obligation to share his information with Washington, ignoring repeated urgent telegrams asking for reports. He was only a temporary specialist, borrowed from a major oil company for the duration, and was soon to return to his original employers. I was amazed at his insouciance.

A strange thing happened to me one day which illustrates how out of touch with reality many Foreign Service people were in 1945. I had become quite friendly with the charg#, whom I found personable, intelligent, and eager to please. One Saturday morning one of our Egyptian messengers, a young man wearing a red tarboosh, came rushing into my workroom. He told me excitedly that the charg# d'affaires wanted me to join him immediately in the Minister's office — immediately, at once, on a most urgent matter. I wondered what on earth could be so urgent, while the messenger danced around me in an agony of impatience.

Entering the Minister's office, I found the charg#, whom I shall call Ronald, serving a morning cup of tea to a visitor — a carefully groomed elderly Arab gentleman with a goatee, leaning on a gold-headed cane and wearing on his head the usual red tarboosh. Ronald leapt to his feet, and with great deference introduced me to “His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed Ali.” he described me to the Prince, who it turned out was King Farouk's uncle and heir to his throne, as a representative of the U.S. Department of State who was studying “the problems of the Foreign Service.” Perhaps, Ronald suggested, His Royal Highness, who had observed us over many years, could give me his ideas on deficiencies in our Service and how they could

I felt the hackles on the back of my neck begin to bristle and I am sure my face was reddening with anger. Why on earth should I care what this aging scion of third-rate royalty in what was then an unimportant country thought of any aspect of the United States of America, the world's most powerful and successful nation-state? Why should I, introduced as an official representative of my country, be put in the position of having to listen to this old nobody criticize us? The whole situation seemed to me both nonsensical and humiliating.

Fortunately, the old Prince misunderstood the question, and began to talk about how improper it was for Christian countries to send missionaries to Islamic countries which already had their traditional established religion. We parted politely after some aimless chatter, but inwardly I was boiling. Later on I brought up the subject with Ronald, and threshed it out with him. You are undervaluing your country, I told him. Forget about ancient royalties and focus on the power realities of the postwar world. Ronald was quite taken aback. He had been pleased, he said, when Mohammed Ali, heir to the throne of Egypt, had dropped in for a friendly chat. He wanted me to see on what friendly terms he was with the royal family, and had not realized that he would embarrass me. Ronald was essentially a talented officer, and in his later career did well, advancing to ambassadorial

rank. But in 1945 he had not yet learned that after World War II we were living in a different world, with new social and political values.

After several weeks in Cairo, during which my education was advanced considerably, I took another week to visit Beirut, Damascus, and Jerusalem — two legations and a consulate general. (In 1945 the Foreign Service had Ministers rather than ambassadors in the smaller countries. The diplomatic missions headed by Ministers Plenipotentiary, including Cairo, were called legations.) I found bright young officers in all three places and was particularly taken with the 30-year-old charg# d'affaires in Damascus, a rather fiery young man who was not at all loath to assert himself and who seemed very much on top of his job. I liked him far better than I did some of the older men I met in the Middle East, who felt that the British had a strong traditional policy in the area, while ours was weak and uncertain. This young officer, whose name was William J. Porter, was to advance to ambassadorial rank and represent our country effectively at several US embassies.

It was while I was touring Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine that I first encountered the Zionist question and the beginnings of the Jewish-Arab conflict which has been a major problem for the United States for the last forty years. The word had come over the wires that President Truman had made a public pronouncement favoring unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine, then a dependent area ruled by the British under a League of Nations mandate. There were about 500,000 Jews living in Palestine in 1945, I was told, but it was still an Arab country and the Arab leaders were reported to feel that to admit any more Jews would be a tragic mistake, sure to lead to future trouble and turmoil. It was mostly with Americans in the area that I discussed this development, and I found them deeply worried lest encouraging Jewish immigration would wreck all dreams of future good relations with the Arab world.

My general impression of the populations of Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine was that they were far more progressive than the Egyptians appeared to be, and had a noticeably higher standard of living. I did not see only the cities of Beirut, Damascus, and Jerusalem, but

traveled between them in American legation cars and had ample opportunity to observe small towns, villages, and agricultural life. People everywhere appeared busy and cheerful, and as we passed through villages with our American flag flying, children would run beside us shouting at us happily, and we would toot at them in a merry return greeting.

Back in Cairo the first week in December, I said goodbye to all my new Foreign Service friends and departed by Army Transport Command plane for London. My feeling on leaving the Middle East was that my visit there, lasting five weeks, had been one of the great travel experiences of my life. I had never before visited such exotic countries or seen such fascinating sights. The work of the Foreign Service was much more diverse than in Latin America, and the problems more challenging. There was economic promise in the area, largely because of oil resources and prospects, but there was political ferment and uncertainty. Training personnel for duty in this area was going to be a complicated task, involving much instruction in Arabic and other languages and intense study of cultural and political factors.

Studying the London Embassy

Having carefully kept the London Embassy informed on my travel plans by letters and telegrams addressed to Ambassador John Gilbert Winant, I was a bit baffled on arriving in London to find that no one in the administrative section was expecting me, or indeed had ever heard of me. I had some difficulty convincing the old-line FSO who was serving as Administrative Officer that my mission was a serious and official one. Shown my credentials, he reluctantly arranged lodging for me in a Piccadilly hotel, grumbling that the Department should be concerned about fundamentals — by which he meant better pay and allowances — instead of such frills as advanced and specialized in-service training. But next day when I walked into his office, his attitude was entirely different. The Ambassador, it seemed, was interested in me and wanted to see me immediately. It was when I was ushered into Winant's presence that I got the answer to my bewilderment. He was carrying all my letters to him in his pocket, and apparently had not shown them to

anyone! One other person, I learned later, knew about me. This was Waldemar Gallman, Counselor of Embassy for Political Affairs. And dear old Waldy, destined to become a good friend of mine, had the impression from Winant that my visit was an entirely personal one, of interest only to the Ambassador himself.

Eventually, however, we got the whole business sorted out, and word was passed around for everyone to cooperate with my mission. The London Embassy was a large and sprawling one, and I was soon hard at work interviewing officers in the political, economic, commercial, consular, and administrative sections. The political and economic sections were busy and important and both were staffed by senior officers at the first secretary of embassy level. The reason soon became clear. Whereas most embassies and legations were concerned with the affairs of the host country itself, the London Embassy was an interface for cooperation of the two English-speaking allies, Britain and the United States. Each member of the Embassy staff was working with Foreign Office counterparts on international problems of common interest to both countries.

It was only when I talked to the Minister-Counselor for Economic Affairs, the distinguished Harry C. Hawkins who had been for many years a personal assistant to Secretary of State Cordell Hull on negotiating reciprocal trade agreements, that I learned of a peculiarly British problem. It seemed that the British had been caught flat-footed the preceding August when the White House had abruptly canceled the Lend-Lease Program after the Japanese surrender. After straining every nerve and exhausting every resource to carry on the war against the Axis powers, the British were suddenly on the verge of bankruptcy. In this emergency, Hawkins had leapt into the breach. Hurrying to Washington he conferred with leaders in the State Department and the Congress. So much fuss was raised that something had to be done. The Administration by this time had second thoughts. Hawkins and others developed a program for a $3,300,000,000 loan to Britain. Hawkins helped to shepherd this proposal through Congress where he had many friends and was highly esteemed. Altogether, conferring alternately with the British and Americans, Hawkins had made 14 flights across the Atlantic in a three months period. It was an impressive

demonstration of one man's personal effectiveness. I was fascinated to hear this story. Little did I foresee at the time that Harry Hawkins would later on be my chief in the Foreign Service Institute, and that I would become one of his most devoted subordinates.

An Interview with Ambassador Winant

When I was first introduced to Ambassador Winant, he suggested that I come back during Christmas week when he would have more time to talk. I followed through on this suggestion and made a 2 p.m. appointment to see him on December 27. It turned out to be an extraordinary experience. Winant waved me to a seat and then kept me for nearly three hours, telling me in the greatest detail about his career and how he had conducted himself since his arrival in Britain four years earlier. As the American Ambassador during the critical days of the German victories in Europe and bombings of London, it was Winant's role to reassure the British government and people regarding American sympathy and support. Originally from New Hampshire, where he had served as Governor, Winant had been appointed by President Roosevelt to be the first chairman of the Social Security Board, a top-level New Deal position. He replaced Joseph P. Kennedy as Ambassador in London at a period when Kennedy was exceedingly pessimistic as to Britain's chances of survival. The British were delighted to get a more optimistic and sympathetic representative of the United States. Winant was a tall, gaunt, Lincolnesque figure, famous for many things — for his high idealism on social issues, for his fumbling shyness when asked to make a public speech, for his absent-mindedness and complete inability to remember names of his staff and even of his close relatives, and for his enormous kindliness to everyone whose problems came to his attention. His shyness and bumbling manner in no way annoyed the British, who interpreted his personality as one that was endearing through its obvious sincerity. So he had become fantastically popular with people all through the country.

In talking to me, Winant described to me what he had accomplished in promoting British-American friendships, how he had conceived his role as American Ambassador in

wartime, and how he had acted as the principal liaison between top American and top British governmental leaders and military commanders. He was particularly explicit about his role as a conduit between Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, and displayed great pride in the close intimacy which he had developed with Churchill and Foreign Minister Anthony Eden. When Eden's son was killed in battle, Winant said with emotion that it was he, Winant, to whom Eden had first turned for understanding of his paternal grief.

I was quite bewildered at first by Winant's outpouring of personal information, but after a while I sensed that he was reliving with me the glory days of the Roosevelt-Churchill era. Because I was from Washington as a representative of the State Department, he must have attributed to me an entirely unmerited importance and influence, as though he expected me to go back and tell the American people everything that he had accomplished. All I had expected from this interview was a half hour of helpful interest in my survey of the Foreign Service, yet whenever I rose to my feet to leave, he would order me to sit down again, as he had much more to tell me. “NO, no — don't go yet — I want you to get the whole picture,” he would say. “There are a lot more things I need to explain to you.” His secretary would interrupt from time to time to give him some message, but each time he would wave her away impatiently. In the end, I spent the entire afternoon with him.

I never saw Winant again after that one interview, but all through the Embassy I picked up fascinating stories about him. The general opinion among his senior officers was that Winant dramatized himself as one of the great heroes of World War II for the role he had played in cementing the British-American alliance and making it effective. He may even have thought of himself as the natural successor to Roosevelt. Sometime the following year he resigned and returned to the United States, but instead of being hailed as one of the great architects of Allied victory, he found himself virtually unnoticed by the U.S. press and public. So quickly does glory vanish, blown away by the fresh winds of history. I was saddened to read of his death not many months after his retirement from

his ambassadorial post. Perhaps the sudden collapse of his self-image was an intolerable humiliation to this proud and sensitive man.

Impressions of Postwar Britain

In studying the London Embassy, what astonished me most was how fractionated and compartmentalized it seemed to be. Not only were the political and economic sections uncoordinated, but the consular section seemed to be floating loose in the air and there were quite a few individuals around with specialized jobs who did not seem to be reporting to any local superior, but only to offices in Washington. The Administrative Officer left administration largely to British local employees, who used their own judgment and ingenuity, sometimes with strange results. Although Winant made no attempt to run the Embassy, he had one inviolable rule; no telegram to Washington could be sent without his personal approval, and if it contained any sentence reflecting adversely on the Embassy, he would eliminate it.

In short, the London Embassy was disorganized in many ways, and administered erratically. Officer after officer complained to me how difficult it was to get policy guidance and decision. In the British Foreign Office, I was told, every official was familiar with Cabinet policy, and could make instant decisions on almost any issue without clearing with superiors. But American policy was unclear on a long list of issues, and no one had authority to decide anything or plan anything ahead, a situation which resulted in crises almost daily. The one bright spot was Harry Hawkins, who had been brilliant, it seem to me, in the way he had handled Britain's postwar economic emergency. But in general, lines of authority were a crazy quilt of conflicting powers, important jobs were not being done, communication within the Embassy and with Washington was deficient, and I was indescribably appalled by the lack of progress being made to help organize the postwar world.

And yet I was impressed by the intelligence and ability of individual officers, six of whom later were promoted to ambassadorial posts. I presume that the Embassy somehow got most of its work done, but assuredly not very efficiently.

My time in Britain was not exclusively spent in London. A first secretary of embassy and I teamed together on a trip in his car over New Year's to visit the consulates in Manchester and Birmingham and inspect some British industrial plants. With my wartime experiences in industry, I was particularly keen to do this, and found what I observed most meaningful. My companion, the later architect of the NATO alliance, Theodore C. Achilles, was kind enough also to let me do a little sightseeing, visiting Oxford, “that sweet city with its dreaming spires,” and wandering around some of the more famous colleges, including Christ Church where my Columbia M.A. subject, Lewis Carroll, had once lived.

December of 1945 was a gloomy time in England. The shooting war was over, and yet normal conditions had not yet returned. Some 75,000 British war brides of American servicemen who had been stationed in Britain in the years before the Normandy landings on D-Day were about to take off for the United States, and were regarded with envy by many others whose relationships had lapsed — in some cases leaving a pregnant British girl to confront as best she could the prospect of bearing an illegitimate baby. I saw such cases at the consulates, and the experience for me was saddening, for I found the British people remarkably appealing. It was then that I first heard the famous remark about American servicemen, that they were “overpaid, overfed, oversexed, and worst of all, over here!”

Several evenings in London I had delightful contacts in local pubs where I could sip drinks with the people around me and get into social conversations. There was much camaraderie in such places, which sometimes involved group singing of British and American popular songs. But Britain was tired and almost bankrupt; there was a great feeling of let-down and bewilderment as to what the future offered. One night in a pub on Fleet Street some Embassy friends and I had this feeling brought home to us by a middle-

aged employee of one of the news services. Finding out who we were, he began after a few drinks to plead with us. Britain and America were allies, he said, and had fought side by side to win a great war, sharing the burdens as loyal comrades. Now that the war was over, were we no longer allies? Was the USA planning to withdraw to its own rich continent and leave poor old Britain to shift for herself in the bleak European world? The British had accepted American leadership in the fighting, and admired General Eisenhower enormously for his diplomatic and military gifts. But what now? Was Britain to be left in the lurch, weak and exhausted? Were our two nations not friends, and do friends not stand by one another, loyal to the end? Did sentiment mean nothing to Americans? It was all very emotional, stimulated by alcohol, but nevertheless memorable and quite moving. In vino veritas. This was postwar Britain, gloomy and apprehensive. I had my first glimpse of what it was like to be British at mid-century, belonging to a great nation with a magnificent past but a highly uncertain future.

A Final Anecdote

In early January I moved on to Belgium, Holland, and France, where I had further educational experiences. But before leaving Britain, let me return to John Gilbert Winant and the infinity of amusing stories about him. Out of gloomy postwar Britain perhaps one lighthearted story should be told.

The subject of my tale was a young administrative assistant whom I shall call Lincoln Todd. Lincoln was a “good old boy” and every one in the Embassy liked him. But unfortunately he could not control his appetite for alcoholic beverages and was so often incapacitated that the Administrative Officer decided to ask Washington for a replacement. When the necessary telegram was routed to the Ambassador for approval, Winant's eagle eye detected something amiss.

“What are we doing?” he asked apprehensively. “What's the problem?”

The situation was explained. Lincoln was such an alcoholic he couldn't get his work done.

“But we mustn't send this poor fellow home!” the Ambassador exclaimed. “It may hurt his career. We must take care of him ourselves and rehabilitate him.”

The Administrative Officer argued that there was little hope for a successful cure; and anyway he couldn't think of any way to employ Lincoln usefully.

“Put him in my outer office,” Winant proposed. “Let him draft answers to some of the fan mail I'm getting from the people of Britain”

So Lincoln Todd was put into a small office in the Ambassador's suite and given a stack of mail to start on. In mid-morning the Administrative Officer came in to see how well he was doing. No one had been in to check on young Todd, but through the closed door could be heard the rustling sound of papers being shuffled.

“It really seems to be working,” Winant's secretary said. “Maybe we've found something Link can be helpful at.”

“Let's not jump to conclusions,” said the Administrative Officer. “I'm going in to make a check.” And he opened the door.

There was a long table in Lincoln's office, and all along its length letters and papers were scattered. There was a chair tilted back against the wall, and in it sat Lincoln Todd, snoring peacefully. In his hand, with a loop around his wrist, he held one end of a piece of string. The other end was attached loosely to one of Link's more imaginative acquisitions, a black-and-white Muscovy duck. Walking up and dawn the table over the scattered papers, the duck was making that rustling sound that sounded so realistic from the office next door!

Brussels and the Hague

To save space I shall skip over my impressions of a week spent in Belgium, interviewing the staff of the Brussels Embassy and the Antwerp Consulate General, and move on. Conditions were reasonably good in Belgium, I was told, even so soon after the end of the war. Thrifty and alert, the Belgians had enough food and fuel, and had their factories and export businesses once more in operation. But up in the Netherlands, the Dutch had suffered much more under the German occupation. They could eat tulip bulbs, but had very little grain. Conditions were austere.

I learned in Brussels that every Friday there was a courier trip from Paris up to Rotterdam and The Hague; if I wanted to see the country myself, I could ride up with the courier, returning the same day. I had made no arrangements to visit our posts in Holland, but thought even a brief glimpse would be useful. Up early Friday morning, I got into a Ford station wagon with the courier — a Marine Lieutenant. After a brief stop at Antwerp to drop off classified pouches, we crossed the Dutch frontier, passed through Breda and Dordrecht, and headed for Rotterdam. There were burned-out tanks and other military vehicles scattered all along the side of the highway, and we crossed the two branches of the Lower Rhine on pontoon bridges, the permanent structures having been destroyed during the war. The Dutch people we saw in villages and towns looked cold and shabby, but the courier kept telling me how much better they looked than on his last visit two months before, when every one was queued up for Allied military rations.

In Rotterdam we found the entire consular staff huddled for lunch around a stove in the one heated room. The Consul had gone to the U.S. Army mess in The Hague to eat, and we pressed on to the embassy at The Hague after visiting the mess ourselves. While the courier was busy exchanging pouches in the file room, I dropped in on the Administrative Officer, George Haering, a 50-year-old FSO who had come over recently from London. There he had been assigned to the staff of Dr. Stanley Hornbeck, Ambassador to the Netherlands Government in Exile; and with the rest of the staff had now arrived to take

up residence in liberated Holland. The Embassy did not have a separate structure, but occupied two floors of a Dutch office building.

Chatting with Haering, I soon established who I was and why I was there. Almost immediately he suggested my paying a call on Ambassador Hornbeck. At first I demurred, saying I had no business to transact with anyone, but was only sightseeing. That story wouldn't work, Haering told me, for if Hornbeck discovered that a visitor from the Department had not personally called on him, he would be put in such a rage that everyone would suffer. Reluctantly I agreed to make a quick call on the Ambassador, but only pro forma. After a brief wait while Haering explained me to Hornbeck, I was ushered into a chilly office where an elderly man with thin wisps of white hair was sitting at a large desk with his overcoat on. I was later to learn that Stanley Hornbeck, then in his late sixties, had been for many years the Department's top man on Far East affairs. Rigid and dictatorial, he had been eased out of that position and given the Netherlands ambassadorship as a reward for his long career in the Department.

Hornbeck waved me to a chair and came straight to the point.

“What is the purpose of your visit, Mr. Hopkins?”

I explained as best I could that I was on an orientation tour and was studying Foreign Service problems, preparatory to making plans for a postwar in-service training program. How long would I be in The Hague? the Ambassador asked in a steely, insistent voice.

“No time at all, Mr. Ambassador. I just rode up with the courier to see the country. He is waiting for me now.”

“And how long are you staying in Brussels?”

“Just a week, sir. I'm on m way to Paris.” I could sense that I was getting into trouble with this fretful old gentleman.

“One week in Brussels and only a few minutes in The Hague? Mr. Hopkins, who worked out this absurd division of time? Does the Department think we have no problems in The Hague?”

The courier would be loading his pouches by now and waiting for me impatiently. And I could see that it was not going to be easy to make a courteous exit. The Ambassador was boring into me with a gimlet eye and was in no mood to let me escape. I had to do something to pacify him, so I offered to take back to Washington any messages he might want to entrust to me.

“Certainly I have a message to send.” He buzzed for his secretary. “Miss Smith, bring me that list of unanswered telegrams .... Now, Mr. Hopkins, just pull your chair over by mine and read this paper with me. Can you see? In September, three telegrams. In October, five, in November, seven. In December, twelve.” His voice rose to a crescendo. “In toto, twenty-seven unanswered telegrams. Mr. Hopkins, why — why — WHY doesn't the Department of State answer my telegrams?”

Two days later the Ambassador's anguished words were still ringing in my ears as I boarded the train at Brussels for Paris.

A Glimpse of Postwar Europe in 1946

Paris in the Postwar Gloom

All along the railroad line from Brussels to Paris I could see signs of war damage. Burned out and abandoned military vehicles were strewed everywhere. Several railroad stations had their roofs open to the sky, and damaged buildings could be seen in every town we passed through. A Dutch couple who lived in Barcelona shared my railway compartment; they were on their way back to Spain after having spent the Christmas holidays with relatives in Amsterdam, their first trip to their own country since the war. They were

burning with anger against the Germans for all the suffering they had caused the Dutch people during the harsh Nazi occupation.

At the Gare du Nord a car from the Paris Embassy met me and took me to the Hotel Crillon, next door to the Embassy on the Place de la Concorde. This famous hostelry, so elegant before the war, had been taken over by the American military establishment. It looked down at the heels, but with American fuel it was pleasantly warm, one of the few adequately heated buildings in Paris that chilly January. Bewildered French chefs and waiters were trying to serve food from the American commissary in an ornate dining room where magnificent French meals had been served in peacetime to gourmet guests. A worse failure at preparing American dishes palatably I hope never again to experience. A bunch of mountaineers from Macedonia would have done a better job.

I woke up my first morning to the sound of pedestrians clop-clopping along in the street beneath my bedroom window. I learned later that they were wearing wooden soles and heels, for good leather footwear had become unobtainable during the German occupation and these noisy shoes were the French makeshift. When I got out on the streets myself to renew my acquaintance with the glamorous Paris I had once known, people were wearing shabby clothing but somehow still looking neat, especially the chic Parisian women. Stores were open and business was being conducted, but all buildings were chilly for lack of heating fuel, which was scarcer than in Belgium.

On the Rue de la Paix, I saw the Stars and Stripes displayed, and looked in on an American library and periodical reading room. Every chair at every table was occupied by intellectual-appearing men in overcoats. I chatted with the librarian, to find out what they were reading so avidly. She told me that almost all visitors were French professional men who were poring avidly over American technical journals and trying to catch up with what was going on in their various professions. For years they had been cut off by enemy occupation from the Anglo-American world, and now they were trying desperately to re-enter that world and inform themselves on the newest ideas and accomplishments.

Paris was cold and the Parisian people seemed gloomy and dispirited. It was while I was there that first month of 1946 that General Charles de Gaulle, whom I was later to meet and interview in the French West Indies in 1960, resigned as French premier. He had taken over power in France after the Allied liberation in 1944, but had become disgusted with the general disorder and lack of cooperation he encountered everywhere, much of it deliberately fomented by the French Communist party. As all the world knows, he retired to Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises and wrote books in the solitude of his study until he was called back to power in the Algerian crisis of 1958. I can still remember the pithy headline I saw on a Paris newspaper the day of the resignation: De Gaulle s'en va; le crise reste." The liberator had stepped aside, but what good did that do when France was in a postwar crisis, cold, wet, miserable, and hungry?

Inside the American Embassy

The Administrative Officer of the American Embassy, a cheerful, bouncy young officer of my age whose name was Tyler Thompson, greeted me cordially. The Paris Embassy was organized quite differently from the others I had visited; in fact, each embassy or legation or consulate that I visited seemed to be organized differently from all the others. The Paris Embassy was not so tightly administered as the one at Mexico City, but was a vast improvement over London. Thompson, a Princeton graduate of 1930, seemed to have a good grasp of all that was going on. He reported to a much older officer, Hugh Fullerton, who had the titles of Counselor of Embassy and Consul General. Fullerton was officially the Embassy's number two officer, but had no control over the political section because Jefferson Caffery, the experienced Ambassador, preferred to supervise all political functions himself. There was a large economic section headed by Livingston Merchant, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs with the personnel rank of Minister. Merchant had come to the Department of State after working many years for a Wall Street investment firm. Some of the old-line FSOs resented his appointment to such a high rank and desirable post, but everyone who worked for him liked him enormously. Paris

was grim that winter, but the economic officers all told me that Livy Merchant was such a splendid boss that he made their sufferings worthwhile by the quality of his leadership. He was to hold several high offices later in his career, including Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs and Ambassador to Canada.

Fullerton and Thompson seemed to have the administrative problems of the large embassy well under control, but had a heavy workload and many difficulties because of the logistical problems in a great city that was impoverished and miserable. It was hard to say which section of the Embassy was busiest. Our political officers worked seven days a week following the tangled political situation, greatly complicated by the prestige which the French Communists had won by their active participation in the underground resistance during the war. The economic officers, confronted daily with further breakdowns in the precarious French economy, were madly typing or dictating long despatches to Washington, describing all the deficiencies. In the consular section there were long lines of ragged people, extending well out into the street alongside the building, all seeking somehow to get to America, the golden land where they hoped to escape their miseries. There was also a considerable line of people in the passport and citizenship section. These, I was told, were American citizens resident in Europe who were trying to validate their citizenship so that they could go home. Many were German-Americans who had collaborated happily for years with the Nazis in Germany, then had come rushing over to Paris after Hitler's collapse. The Foreign Service was ready for this kind of fair-weather American. The entire staff of the former Berlin citizenship section was on duty in Paris, with all their Berlin records intact. It was easy to identify the collaborators. They were told that they could have passports valid only for the trip home, but that the Federal Bureau of Investigation would be waiting to accost them as they walked down the gangplank and landed on U.S. territory. Doubtless many chose not to leave Europe after all.

Through the good offices of Messrs. Fullerton and Thompson, I was taken fairly soon to the Ambassador's suite and presented to Mr. Caffery. He was affable, took an interest in my mission, and made a number of comments. One of them was that he was not much

impressed with the quality of most career officers that he knew; they seem to him lacking in political astuteness. He himself had been a Chief of Mission for two decades, handling a long series of difficult assignments. He doubted that many of the officers younger than himself were of Chief of Mission calibre, and at Paris thought it best to do without a Political Counselor of Embassy, running the political section himself.

Remembering that Selden Chapin, my boss in the State Department, had once worked under Caffery in Paris, I took occasion one day after my return to Washington to ask Selden what his opinion was of Jefferson Caffery and what it had been like to work under him. Chapin promptly responded that Caffery was a difficult egotist. He was able and experienced, but he kept much valuable information to himself, refusing to share with his staff what he learned from his high-level contacts in the French Government. This secretiveness of the Ambassador made it difficult for his political officers to write reports and despatches which were sufficiently knowledgeable or perceptive to make a good impression in Washington. Caffery regarded himself as working directly for President Roosevelt, and I was told that he did not always let even the Department of State share what he learned about conditions in France.

Personally I was well treated by Caffery. He asked me to attend his staff meetings, along with his various counselors and military and naval attach#s, and here I learned in what a dreadful state of weakness and confusion the French people were living. The economy was depressed; morale was poor among industrial employees; the Army, what there was of it, was poorly equipped, supplied and led; the Navy was practically non-existent; there was little political unity or governmental effectiveness. France was liberated and alive, but progress was painfully slow.

About this same time I was allowed to sit in and observe a regional conference in the Paris Embassy of our senior Foreign Service economic officers from all over Europe. The meeting was to promote the exchange of information on the various countries and to arrive at a composite picture of how much recovery there had been in the European economy

since hostilities had ceased the preceding May. I could have filled several notebooks with all the depressing reports. The German economy, in the heart of Europe, was virtually paralyzed. Traffic was at a standstill on the Rhine, the Danube, and other inland waterways. Railroads were barely able to operate with fuel in short supply, rolling stock damaged, and tracks blocked in many places. Our man from Prague said that the Czechs urgently needed Polish coal for their industries, to which our man from Warsaw said the Poles would have to send up their own empty cars. Certainly not, the other replied, for how could the Czechs be sure that any rolling stock allowed out of Czechoslovakia would ever come back to them? And so it went. There was gloom and distrust everywhere.

Budgeting for Postwar Conditions

All during my weeks in Paris I was busy with my interviewing, learning every day hundreds of valuable facts about the Foreign Service and its people. I saw a good deal of my friends in the Administrative Office. One day Tyler Thompson called me in to show me in consternation a proposed 1947 budget which had just arrived from the State Department for review and comment. This budget would have cut back on Paris consular and administrative personnel, would have reduced the size of the economic staff by more than a third, and on the other hand would have supplied the Embassy with a batch of new commercial officers who would presumably, now that the war was over, rush out and promote the sale of American exports on the recovering European market. A more unrealistic document, more out of harmony with the precarious state of the European economy, would have been hard to imagine. I knew exactly who had drafted this absurd piece of nonsense — a staff of old-line Department of Commerce people with mostly Latin American trade experience. They were newcomers in the Office of the Foreign Service. I had already talked to some of these people in Washington and had been appalled by their unawareness of world conditions. I doubted that what they had put on paper had been shown to Chapin and Steyne, who would have realized instantly how out of touch it was with grim realities.

I lay awake hours that night, wondering how I could best help my Paris friends ward off budgetary disaster. I decided that I would write Chapin a truly imaginative essay on the kind of Foreign Service budget suited for postwar conditions. Next day I sat at my typewriter for hours, banging out a memo of more than 20 pages. I no longer have a copy of this document, but it was a humdinger. The Department's whole approach on the budget issue was a grisly mistake, I wrote. There should be no picayune haggling over budgetary details, but instead a Department of State request to the White House, the Bureau of the Budget, and the Congress which would ask for such a huge sum of money that it would stagger the American people. We needed to launch a national debate on what to do about the economic devastation that existed in the wake of the greatest military conflict ever waged on the planet Earth. Several hundred million dollars would be needed to build up an adequate postwar U.S. Foreign Service. Far vaster sums, mounting into the billions, would be needed in postwar Europe and other critical areas to help our wartime allies and other friendly nations get back on their feet.

The details of such a budget, I wrote Chapin, would be far less important than the sheer breath-taking size of our request for funds. We needed to thrust the Department of State so aggressively into the limelight of national attention that official Washington could not evade the issues we were raising. We would show the country that the State Department was staffed with imaginative people and had a realistic grasp of the postwar world. This was no time to follow the usual procedure of going to the President and the Congress, hat in hand, to ask for piddling sums.

My main idea was that we needed the shock effect of doing something completely unexpected. Only a dramatically enormous budget request, ten or twenty times what we had had before, would do the trick. In the meantime, I told Chapin, the European portion of the document his people drafted was so stupid it was downright disgraceful. With Europe on the brink of despair, it was incredible that anyone should think in terms of promoting

American exports, for the Europeans had no money. Why not fire the entire budget staff and start over again with some people who knew what the postwar world was like?

Fullerton and Thompson were a little dazzled by the sweep and forthrightness of my proposal, but did not object to it. Let it go in, they said, and maybe it will wake up some Washington bureaucrats who are living in a dream world. Chapin never answered my memo in writing, but when I got back to Washington, he told me that he had read it with a feeling of mounting excitement. With my memo in hand, he said, he had charged down the hall to the office of Donald Russell, Assistant Secretary of State for Administration, slammed it down on his desk, and said “Don, you've got to read this! It has some damned important ideas in it.”

But Russell was not to be moved. He was a South Carolina lawyer with no experience in Washington who owed his job to the fact that he was a junior law partner of Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, a politician who felt that he must surround himself with personal friends in whom he had confidence. Byrnes once wrote that nothing in his career as a South Carolina small-town lawyer had prepared him to deal with the Soviet leaders. He might have added that nothing in Russell's career had prepared him for any international problems at all. He made little impact in Washington, and was totally forgotten as soon as Byrnes and he departed.

But aside from Russell, the other people around Chapin were also not audacious enough to accept new ideas and stir up a national issue. Their training was always to think in minimum terms, justifying every budget item with minute care. In that atmosphere, what chance did my proposal have? Chapin was excited momentarily, but soon the whole memo was forgotten. However, it may have had some effect as one of many unfavorable reactions to that first insane budget proposal, for when all the embassies in Europe sent in their outraged responses, the cumulative effect of all our rebuttals resulted in a more sensible final document. And no one in OFS after my return told me I was crazy. I was just regarded as a newcomer to government who hadn't learned the realities. I am reminded of

a conversation I once had in the Department's executive lunchroom with an elderly retired gentleman who had once served as Ambassador to a small Asian country.

“We people who have been around the Department for a long time,” he told me, “have learned to tolerate inexperienced young newcomers like you, who think you can come in here from the outside and change our organization and the way it functions!”

But back to the Paris Embassy, I found it a fitting place to complete my orientation tour of the Foreign Service. After a month there, I was extremely eager to get home and be reunited with my family, and felt that I had accomplished as much as I could at this stage. My orientation had lasted almost six months, and it was time to return to the Department and put my ideas in circulation. My tour had been enormously valuable, I felt, for I came home with a good working knowledge of our embassies, legations, and consulates. I had formally visited altogether five posts in Mexico and Cuba, one in Canada, four in the Middle East, three in Britain, two in Belgium, and finally one (Paris) in France. I had notes on several hundred employees whom I had interviewed, on all levels from ambassadors down to code clerks and secretary-typists. I had talked not only to American employees, but also to some of the local foreigners who worked for us and in many cases were among our most valuable people.

Ready now to go to work, I reported back to the Department of State in February, bursting with ideas of things that needed to be done to reinvigorate the Foreign Service and equip it for its postwar world. The immediate task was to draft a series of papers incorporating these ideas. Not only did the Foreign Service need to be brought up to date on all that was happening in America and in the wider world, but it had to be completely reoriented and given a much more activist conception of its responsibilities. It had thought before World War II of itself as a listening and responding organization, “the eyes and ears of the United States abroad.” But that was not good enough for the future. The United States was taking a leadership role in organizing the international community for peace. Through the new United Nations and through much more extensive and intimate associations with other

nations, men of good will could create a world in which diverse peoples could live together in harmony and brotherhood. It was a time for new planetary thinking, and the people of the Foreign Service must be part of the new thinking and must help to bring about a real transformation in worldwide relationships.

Working for the Department of State

Conditions in 1946

The Department of State when I returned from my foreign tour in 1946 seemed to me a very strange organization, made up of a number of disparate elements which were struggling with each other for power and influence. People in the oldest part of the Department, the so-called geographic offices and divisions, were strongly oriented toward traditional bilateral diplomacy, dealing with foreign governments on a country-by-country basis. They thought of themselves as keeping track of everything that was happening in the various areas of the world, reading the reports of our embassies and legations for their informational value and then in turn providing policy guidance to our missions abroad whenever any situation developed which seemed to require an American action or decision. Some of the officers in the geographic area were Foreign Service officers who were rotated back and forth between Washington and the field posts; others were permanent Civil Service employees, usually with a strongly academic background.

But there was another part of the Department which was quite new, quite dynamic, and quite innovative. It was made up of those thinkers and planners who had worked through the war years drafting the charters for the United Nations and other international agencies. Many of them had not been working in the Department's old building next to the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue, but in a splendid private mansion in Washington's Georgetown section known as Dumbarton Oaks. The United Nations planners were members of a wartime addition to the Department of State known as the Office of Special Political Affairs. This unit was eventually to evolve into the Bureau of

International Organization Affairs and to deal with both the United Nations headquarters and with a whole series of international organizations known as the specialized UN agencies. Among these were the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), the World Health Organization, the International Labor Office, and the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Closely allied with the UN planners were the economists in the offices and divisions of the Department dealing with international economic affairs. By 1946 these economic offices had already played a role in the important Bretton Woods conference of 1944, and had helped to set up the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1945. When I arrived on the scene they were heavily involved in planning something to be called the International Trade Organization, which eventually evolved into a consultative arrangement known as GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Economists liked to think globally, arguing that the world economy was a global network and no respector of national boundaries. The global approach made the diplomatic types in the geographic offices very uncomfortable. Each sovereign country, they thought, had to be dealt with directly and individually. They were highly skeptical of all the new talk about multilateral diplomacy. They did not think that all the elaborate new machinery of multinational discussion and consultation would work out to be very effective. And they were quite determined not to surrender any of their traditional roles in American foreign relations. They constituted the political branch of the Department and they argued that international politics was dominated by competing nationalisms and national interests. It was necessary, they insisted, for diplomatic relations to be between governments and to be carried out basically by direct bi-national contacts.

The struggle between the bilateral and multilateral approaches to American foreign relations was going full tilt in 1946. It lasted throughout my twenty-three years in the Department and I presume that it is still going on. But the multilateralists lost a lot of

ground when the Soviet Union began using its veto in the Security Council to protect its own national interests. By refusing to be a part of a cooperative world community and by treating the West as their enemy, the leaders in the Kremlin effectively prevented a lot of the United Nations machinery set up in the 1940's from realizing the dreams of its planners.

But the struggle between multilateral and bilateral forms of diplomacy was only one of many which I found going on in 1946. There was also a constant struggle between the Foreign Service planners with whom I was associated and the leaders of the Civil Service bureaucracy ensconced in what was then called the Bureau of the Budget, and is now OMB, the Office of Management and Budget. The BOB, as I shall call it, thought of itself as the President's executive arm in controlling the entire executive branch of the Federal Government. The BOB people in 1946 did not want the Foreign Service to have its own separate personnel system, organized like the Army and the Navy in a hierarchical manner. They thought that Foreign Service posts should be staffed by the Civil Service. They argued for standardization of all Government personnel systems and complete equality of the Foreign Service with the rest of the Federal bureaucracy.

The guiding principle of the Foreign Service, however, was that diplomacy was a profession requiring outstanding individuals who were specially trained in foreign languages, cultures, histories, governments, political customs, and so on. These outstanding individuals could be recruited through competitive examinations and offered the excitement and glamour of careers in diplomacy. The Budget Bureau refused to concede that career diplomats were different from anyone else; put everybody under Civil Service, the Budget people said, and let's get rid of all this snobbish nonsense about intellectual and social distinctions. The Foreign Service planners in Selden Chapin's organization argued back that diplomacy called for a degree of talent and commitment that the Civil Service could not consistently provide. Good people could doubtless be found under Civil Service for the glamour spots, they said, but without a career system, how could talented officers be persuaded to staff hardship posts, remote and disagreeable but

nevertheless important to U.S. diplomacy? How could they be motivated to learn difficult foreign languages requiring many years of study? The debate went on endlessly, and I was to find myself right in the middle of it for several years.

A very pressing problem in 1946 was of an entirely different nature. The Department of State had inherited on January 1 of that year, by one stroke of President Truman's pen, all the temporary wartime agencies which had been recruited in the Roosevelt era. These included the Office of War Information, established to influence wartime world opinion and combat enemy propaganda; the Foreign Economic Administration, which had waged economic warfare against the Axis powers and sought to mobilize the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency, which during the war collected intelligence, carried out counterintelligence duties, and performed a wide variety of special secret operations. There were many excellent people in these organizations who were already oriented toward foreign affairs; many of them possessed valuable expertise. It was proposed that the Department should evaluate these organizations and their individual people and decide which functions and personnel it should retain for peacetime duty. The transfer to the State Department brought in thousands of new employees, of whom about 2,000 were already scheduled for release. Another 7,000 or so were hanging on, uncertain of their status, to see what they would be offered by our department.

There were many decisions which urgently needed to be made and could only be made authoritatively by the Secretary of State or by specially empowered subordinates. Someone needed to decide how to fit the new multilateral diplomacy into the Department, what to do about the future of the Foreign Service, how to strengthen and enlarge the Department for all its new responsibilities, and how to structure and orient the entire organization. But where was the Secretary, and what were his wishes?

The Secretary of State for the first two years of the Truman administration, 1945 and 1946, was James F. Byrnes. A former Senator from South Carolina, Byrnes had been a prominent figure in the Roosevelt years. By many accounts he had wanted to be FDR's

running mate in the 1944 election, but had lost out to Harry S. Truman. He was not experienced in administrative management, but in law and politics. And he came into office at a time when the United States was deeply involved in negotiations with its wartime allies, especially British, French, and Russians, about how to organize the postwar world. All through his term of office, Byrnes was repeatedly involved in high-level conferences, mostly in Europe, and these not only absorbed his time and energy but left him little time in Washington to deal with internal matters. Deprived of the Secretary's executive supervision the Department drifted indecisively for many months. The situation led to a bon mot of that era which was widely quoted in Washington, “The State Department fiddles while Byrnes roams.” Without leadership at the top to provide unity of thought and action, the various offices pursued their separate goals. The press complained that it could not figure out what the Department stood for in 1946, for it spoke with many voices. One correspondent hit the nail on the head by reporting to his newspaper that the State Department was not a true organization at all, but only “a loose confederation of warring tribes.”

Involvement in Foreign Service Planning

It took me several weeks after my return to Washington that February to report to my superiors in OFS all that I had learned in six months of studying the Foreign Service and what my evaluations were as an outsider with a fresh point of view. My notebooks were crammed with day-by-day reports on everything I had seen and heard, and I was not reluctant to summarize my findings. These were both sympathetic and critical. I had taken a great liking to Foreign Service people, whom I found generally attractive, friendly, intelligent, and admirably devoted to their responsibilities. But I deplored the many evidences I had found of weak administration and poor personnel management.

The conclusions I reported could be paraphrased as follows: “In general the men and women of the Foreign Service are a fine group of people — competent, dedicated, and deeply interested in their work. There are very few members of ethnic minorities and

almost all women are clerks and secretaries without officer status. But aside from that, the Service is more broadly representative of the American population than I had expected, recruited from all regions of the United States and from a diversity of economic and educational backgrounds.

“Abilities vary a great deal. We have a respectable number of quite outstanding career officers and a much larger number who are highly competent and do our country much credit. The Service does a great deal of routine work in such fields as visa issuance, protection of American citizens, and promotion of international trade. Those officers who have been assigned for long periods to routine consular duties have had their minds and imaginations dulled, with the result that we have some veteran officers who are useful at what they are doing, but have limited potential for further development. We also have a few seriously deficient officers who should be retired or selected out in the near future.

“Morale is surprisingly good in spite of the fact that the system of assignments and promotions is not at all equitable. Some officers have been assigned advantageously to challenging duties, have been promoted regularly, and are happy in their careers. Others have been less fortunate and feel frustrated and neglected. While favoritism is a factor in Foreign Service careers, so is blind luck; the course of many careers is determined by chance rather than by systematic personnel management. Many positions in the Service, especially in consular work, require only average ability and are stultifying for officers of high intelligence who hunger for more challenging responsibilities. It is useful to assign young officers to such positions for training early in their careers, but those who demonstrate potential should be rotated systematically to other responsibilities.

“Many officers with good educational backgrounds struck me as being out of touch with contemporary American life and thought. Their minds and imaginations ought to be stimulated by new academic experiences. Periods of reorientation and advanced training are badly needed.

“Most of our embassies seem to be poorly organized and administered. Our mission chiefs and other senior officers are frequently not good executives. It is common for them to become so absorbed in their personal duties and activities that they do not provide good supervision to their staffs and do not delegate enough responsibilities to their subordinates. The Department should give a great deal more attention to administration and see that our field posts are better organized and better administered; they are not the well-managed efficient organizations they could and should be in which all duties and responsibilities are carefully defined and well understood.”

Among those with whom I discussed these findings was my Mexico City friend, Carl W. Strom, who was now in Washington. While I was touring Middle Eastern and Western European posts, the director of OFS, Selden Chapin, had brought in a number of new people and strengthened his staff considerably. In charge of the new Division of Foreign Service Planning was a sparkling and imaginative officer by the name of Andrew B. Foster. Strom had been brought in as Foster's senior deputy. His principal responsibility was to head a five-man team which was to draft a comprehensive new charter for the postwar Foreign Service. This new chapter, when enacted into legislation by the Congress, would provide statutory authority for all the changes and improvements which the OFS group had in mind. Strom was an excellent choice to take charge of the drafting work, for he had a comprehensive grasp of the changes needed and an exceptional talent for thinking them through to final details. His team included an experienced lawyer from the Office of the Legal Adviser and three bright younger people with ideas and imagination. One of these was assigned specifically to the section which would provide statutory authority for the proposed new Foreign Service Institute.

The plan for me was that I was to become an assistant director of the Institute when it was established, and to have specific responsibility for programs of advanced in-service training for middle-grade and senior officers. Since the Institute did not yet exist, I was slotted into a Civil Service position in a unit of OFS called the Division of Training Services

and given the title of Assistant Chief. The training division at that stage was busy mostly with providing orientation and basic training to miscellaneous new employees of the Department and Foreign Service. I had few immediate operational duties, so I settled down with a secretary to draft a series of papers in which I proposed plans to improve the effectiveness of the Department's administration of the Foreign Service. In each of my projects I conferred fully with Strom, in whose judgment I had great confidence. In return he kept me fully informed in all that was going on in Foreign Service planning and the drafting of the proposed new legislation.

One of my early think-pieces was an essay on the organization and administration of embassies, legations, and consulates. (The emphasis was on embassies, for by 1946 most of our pre-war legations had been elevated to embassy status.) My essay, which I called “The Embassy of the Future,” proposed a standard organizational pattern for all our embassies. Each embassy, I proposed, should give its informational and cultural staff, its consular activities, and its administrative section the same status as that already enjoyed by its political and economic sections. Each of the five sections should be headed by a chief, with an appropriately high title, but instead of reporting directly to the ambassador the five section chiefs would be supervised by a senior executive officer. This official, to be known as the Deputy Chief of Mission, or DCM, would be responsible to the ambassador for all embassy operations. He would coordinate the work of all five sections and free the ambassador for the diplomatic functions which only an ambassador could perform. He would also substitute for the ambassador in periods of absence or illness and be the ambassador's principal adviser.

As things worked out, my one-one-five plan, as I called it, was officially adopted by the Office of the Foreign Service and gradually implemented in all Foreign Service staffing. It is still the standard organizational plan for U.S. embassies today. The DCM position has come to be regarded as a prestigious one to which all ambitious Foreign Service officers aspire. It is especially important to have such a position, occupied by an experienced career officer, when the ambassador is chosen from outside the career

service for political reasons and is not familiar with diplomatic operations. An example of how the system has operated can be taken from the later career of my friend Strom. Appointed to be Deputy Chief of Mission in Korea during the Eisenhower administration, Carl took over responsibility from a politically appointed ambassador during a long period of absence and ran the Seoul embassy as the American charg# d'affaires. In this capacity he showed the Department that he could deal successfully with the Korean chief of state, the difficult Syngman Rhee. Favorably impressed, the Department nominated Carl next to be ambassador to Cambodia, where he dealt with another difficult Asian, Prince Norodom Sihanouk. He had a final foreign assignment as ambassador to Bolivia, a turbulent country with a difficult Andean climate to which we have nearly always sent a career man as ambassador. Naturally enough Carl found that he could focus much better on his ambassadorial responsibilities when he had a capable DCM to run his embassy for him.

Although I was delighted to find Strom in Washington and to be able to associate with him closely, I was saddened by another development. The brilliant and charming Alan N. Steyne, whom I had liked so much in 1945 and who had been the principal individual responsible for recruiting me, was no longer in OFS. He had suffered a nervous breakdown from a combination of overwork and difficult personal problems. He went to Florida for some weeks to try to recuperate, but returned still in a highly nervous and depressed state. His fianc#e, an attractive young English woman, came over from London to try to comfort him, but one day Alan ended his life with a revolver in the basement of his club — an inexplicable tragedy for a man who had an exceedingly important role to play and a fine career ahead of him.

As spring came in 1946 we began to assemble the staff which would form the nucleus of the planned Foreign Service Institute. As director a splendid man was recruited. He was William P. Maddox, a Harvard Ph. D. and former Rhodes Scholar who had taught international relations at Princeton and Pennsylvania. He had spent the war years in Italy and Britain for the OSS. All in all, Maddox had just the background the position required.

We also recruited three well-qualified people who would be assistant directors along with me — Laurence W. Taylor, a fine all-round consular and diplomatic officer whom I had discovered in Montreal and recommended for the position; John B. Whitelaw, a Yale graduate with a background in both teacher training and administrative management; and Henry Lee Smith, Jr., a Princeton Ph. D. whose special field was linguistics and who had already achieved an outstanding reputation for his language work with the Army, employing all the latest methods of foreign language instruction. Taylor was to head up the basic training of new junior officers, indoctrinating them into the Foreign Service; Whitelaw would be in charge of all forms of clerical, fiscal, and administrative training; and Smith's work for the next ten years was to develop a superior instructional staff and superlatively good program in the field of foreign languages. He was to become unquestionably the Institute's greatest single asset and to have an influence on American foreign relations that extended well beyond foreign language training.

Helping Out in the Department's Reorganization

While these preparations were slowly getting underway, a curious sequence of events pulled me away from my concentration on Foreign Service matters in the summer of 1946 and got me temporarily involved in something quite different — the restructuring and operational reorientation of the home service of the Department of State.

I had been worrying about the disorganized state of the Department during my overseas tour. Everywhere I went, from Mexico to Egypt to France, Foreign Service people were complaining to me that the Department was not providing them adequately either with foreign policy guidance or with administrative and financial support. The general opinion was that the Department had emerged from the war years with very little power or prestige, that it had been overwhelmed and dominated by the huge organizations of the military services, and that now that peace had come it badly needed to be built up into a large and strong government agency which would be the President's principal arm in

dealing with world affairs. It was also evident in 1945 and early 1946 that the Department was still very weak and divided, and not at all ready for its postwar responsibilities.

Coming back to Washington after hearing an endless stream of complaints from field officers, I quite naturally began asking my colleagues in the Department what they thought was wrong. Why couldn't the Department do a better job of formulating American foreign policy, why couldn't it communicate its principles and purposes better to its people, why couldn't it speak out clearly with one strong voice? What needed to be done to make it an effective organization?

The answers, it seemed, were of two kinds. There was first of all the already described disunity which prevailed between the old-line foreign relations people in the geographic offices, on the one hand, and on the other, the new global planners who were busily working to establish a whole new network of multilateral agencies to deal with world problems across the board. But there was an immediate problem which concerned me even more. Since it was the geographic people who were actually running our foreign relations on a day-to-day basis, I wanted to know how they arrived at the policies which they implemented in their contacts with foreign embassies in Washington and which they imparted to our diplomatic missions abroad.

One answer I got was that it was not necessary for our country desk officers in Washington to be guided by a written body of doctrine because they had been dealing with foreign affairs all their lives and knew what they were doing. Foreign policy? “Foreign policy is how we feel about things” one State Department man was quoted as saying. It sounded like one of those old Proper Bostonian stories where the old lady was asked, where do you Boston ladies buy your hats? The answer being, “Buy our hats? We don't buy our hats. We have our hats!” Just the same way, the State Department had its policies, it seemed. Such an attitude stemmed from the old days when the United States was an isolationist power and the State Department was mostly concerned just with observing the march of international events. In those days the Department was small,

most officials knew each other personally, and anything that happened could be dealt with quite informally.

But in the postwar years, with the United States at long last asserting international leadership, it was obviously necessary for us to have specific and far-reaching foreign policy objectives and to work to achieve them. So I pursued my inquiries more diligently, and was told that the Department made its foreign policies case by case, dealing with situations as they arose. “Foreign policy is made on the cables,” several officers told me. “When one of our overseas embassies asks for guidance on some matter, we get together and figure out an answer. Sometimes we have meetings with the various interests involved and obtain everyone's viewpoint. When we have an agreement, we send out a cable, on which all interested parties put their initials.”

It seemed to me that this was a strange way to do business. Never reluctant to put my ideas in writing, I sat down at my typewriter and wrote a long think-piece proposing what seemed to me a much better way to make foreign policy and then to have it properly coordinated and disseminated throughout the organization. Instead of making policy case by case, and then having individual decisions accumulate into a body of precedents which would guide future decisions, what the Department of State should do, I argued, was to have the Secretary surround himself with a group of thinkers who would discuss all alternatives and then hammer out a body of general doctrine, explicit and consistent, which would be controlling over all individual cases and decisions. Let's not have decisions governing policy, I wrote; let's have policy governing decisions. Let's make sure that all the conflicting principles involved are threshed out on the top level first, and not left unresolved so that endless meetings have to be held at the work level every time some difficulty must be dealt with.

There was a lot more to my essay than this. What I tried to do was to take the principles enunciated in Chester Barnard's classic book on executive management, The Functions of the Executive (which had been my bedside Bible ever since my Nieman year at

Harvard), and apply them as best I could to the situation in the Department. The first function of an executive was to make policy at the top, utilizing a small staff of advisers; the second function was to set up a chain of command, which would make it quite clear who was responsible at each operating level and insure that all functions were clearly delegated down to the proper level; and the third function was to establish channels of communication, so that everyone understood policies and how they should be carried out. Then the work would be distributed, but the workers would be unified. I wrote this as clearly as I could and gave my essay a long title, “A Suggested Approach to Improving the Efficiency of the Department of State.”

No one had asked me for my ideas, so I did not submit my essay in the form of a report. What I did was to take it to the editors of the American Foreign Service Journal, a monthly published by the members of the Foreign Service. They looked it over, liked it, and ran it in two parts which were published in the issues for May and June, 1946. How many people read it I have no idea, but soon after the first installment appeared, a young man in a Navy lieutenant's uniform came to my office in a state of obvious excitement. He introduced himself as Just Lunning, recently transferred into the Department from the OSS organization, and said that he was the new chief of the Department's Division of Management Planning, which was undertaking to plan a reorganization of the Department. It would incorporate in one logical structure all the different disparate elements which were now theoretically under the Secretary's control but had not yet had their duties and relationships defined. He said that he had found the insights in my article very helpful, that he would like to see the second installment immediately, and that he would also like to read anything else that I had written.

Lunning and I talked for quite a while and found our ideas congenial. He was a new type to me, a large, rather awkward man who spoke English in what I later learned was a Danish accent; he articulated his words as though he had a mouthful of mashed potatoes which kept the sounds a bit muffled. He was about my age, but had an entirely different background; I think he had spent his early life in Denmark, then had come to America to

assist in his family's importing business. His father, I was to learn, ran the Jensen's Silver establishment on New York's Fifth Avenue.

After Lunning and I had exchanged views for a while, he invited me to attend one of his staff meetings and talk to a group of his people along the lines laid down in my Journal essay. This was soon followed by an invitation to join the Division of Management Planning myself. I told my new Danish-American friend that I would love to work with him on his reorganization plans, but that my first loyalty was to Selden Chapin and OFS. Eventually it was arranged that I could divide my time for a limited period in such a way that I could work with Lunning's group for several hours a day, taking part in discussions and producing a long series of papers. Thus I labored away on two jobs all during the hot summer months of 1946. There came a day toward midsummer when Just asked me to take all the individual reports prepared by members of his staff and combine them into one coherent over-all plan. There was no air-conditioning in most Department buildings in that era, so I took a huge stack of reports home with me, stripped to my boxer shorts in my own study, and turned on the electric fan. For a solid week I labored away, typing out several thousand words each day and finally finishing my task.

The summary report that I put together was not the final one that went to the Secretary of State for action. Lunning and his deputy Elinor Reams added to it and subtracted from it, and so did several other people. Eventually what was produced was a large printed document of 90 double-sized pages, complete with elaborate charts and graphs and tables of statistics. It told the story of the Department's organizational history from the time of Thomas Jefferson to that of Cordell Hull and James F. Byrnes, then analyzed postwar needs and resources and proposed a number of alternate solutions. I still have a copy of this document in my files. My name does not appear anywhere in it, but I think I can recognize traces of my handiwork here and there. All I can say with confidence is that I participated in the work of reorganization at a vital time in American history, and that my services must have been of some value, or I would not have been asked to work so hard.

The report went up the line to Lunning's boss, a mysterious character named J. Anthony Panuch on whom I never laid eyes. All I know is that he worked behind the scenes for Donald Russell, the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration, and that he apparently was responsible for recruiting Just Lunning from OSS. The report was addressed to Russell and signed by a consultant named O. L. Nelson. It thanks Just Lunning and Elinor Reams “who have done most of the work” and “you and Mr. Panuch for your interest and continued support.” It suggests that Russell should get together a high-level board which would make final decisions after the report had had wide circulation and study by all interested parties. I presume that those final decisions were made and carried out, for the Department was in very much better shape by the time that James F. Byrnes was replaced as Secretary of State by George C. Marshall, effective January 1, 1947.

I stopped working for Lunning some time the autumn of 1946 and returned full time to my duties in the Office of the Foreign Service. Lunning himself did not stay around much longer; when his report had been approved and acted on, he resigned from the Department and went to work again in his family importing business. I was sorry to see him go, for he was highly intelligent and an earnest, level-headed man, well-equipped for the job he was asked to do. I came to like him very much. I saw him a few times in New York City for the next year or two, then lost contact. Word came to me some years later that he was no longer alive, having died young of some fatal malady. It is my judgment that the services he performed for the Department of State were most valuable. He deserves to be remembered with gratitude.

I had one final job to do for the Division of Management Planning before I cleaned out my desk there. The Bureau of Administration, of which Lunning's division was a part, decided that it was urgently important for the Department of State to move out of the building next door to the White House into much larger quarters where the Department's diverse units could be brought within walking distance of each other. There was no perfect answer to this need, but what was desired was that President Truman should give the State

Department the fine new building occupied by the War Department at Virginia Avenue and Twenty-first Street, NW, plus a number of satellite buildings along Twenty-third Street and along C Street between Twenty-first and Twenty-third. The War Department was reluctant to move out, even though a new combined Department of Defense was being planned with all three armed services headquartered at the Pentagon.

My role in this affair was to be the principal drafting officer for a letter to the President in which the Secretary of State would set forth the arguments in favor of the requested move. A group of us, including some talented visual aid specialists, sat down and developed a splendid-appearing document, complete with photographs, charts, and factual statistics, which set forth the State Department case. The completed document was then taken by Carlisle Humelsine, the new Assistant Secretary of State for Administration, to top levels. It must have been effectively drafted, for a few weeks later the President gave his approval, the War Department moved to the Pentagon, and the State Department took over the new complex. As is now well-known, a much larger State Department building was eventually constructed, filling up the whole four-block area between Twenty-first, Twenty-third, C Street and E Street.

When the time came for the move, which was set for January 1, 1947, many Foreign Service officers and others assigned to the geographical divisions were quite reluctant to leave the building we called “the old grey lady of Pennsylvania Avenue.” I heard opinions expressed to the effect that we were giving up “a building which looks like a foreign office” for one with a decided military appearance. For the War Department had decorated the front lobby of its building with a huge mural, about 100 feet long, which showed marching soldiers, huge artillery pieces, the most modern tanks, and zooming planes which were bombing and strafing. It took the Department of State some years to get this most unsuitable mural blotted out and painted over.

Only a minority of our personnel could be housed in the main structure, the rest of us going to the various satellite buildings. One of the converted brick apartment houses was

given to the Bureau of Economic Affairs, one was shared by the Bureau of International Organization Affairs and the Bureau of Public Affairs, and another went to the Bureau for Research and Intelligence, which was staffed mostly by the research portion of the former Office of Strategic Services which the State Department had inherited (other portions of OSS went to the new Central Intelligence Agency on Twenty-sixth Street). There were some temporary wooden structures on Twenty-third Street which went to the Department's administrative offices and divisions. One brick building, a narrow eight-story affair located at 2115 C Street, went to the Division of Training Services, and it was there, on March 7, 1947, that this division was formally converted into the new-born Foreign Service Institute.

Bureaucratic Warfare and Its Effects

Before telling the story of the Institute's early history, I must first narrate what had happened to the new Foreign Service draft legislation on which my friends in OFS were working. While I was on detail to Just Lunning and the Division of Management Planning, the team headed by Carl Strom was moving steadily ahead with its draft. The final and most difficult section of this was master-minded personally by Carl. It had to do with all the provisions relating to separation and retirement and specifically worked out the actuarial details of retirement pensions. With his mathematical training, Carl was superbly equipped for this task. Other provisions of the legislation gave the Foreign Service a new class structure, with liberal salaries, but required all Foreign Service officers of career to be legally “separated out”, which is to say dismissed, for sub-standard performance. They were to be dropped also for failure to win class promotions in a reasonable time, and to be retired at the age of 60 unless they should reach the class of career minister, which was equivalent to ambassadorial rank. In other words, it was an “up or out” system similar to those in effect for Army, Navy, and Air Force officers, who had to retire whenever they could not reach the next grade in a reasonable number of years. Selden Chapin had been an Annapolis graduate and a naval officer before joining the Foreign Service, and he felt

very strongly about the necessity for constant pruning, to keep only the best people and let the others go.

There were some other important provisions. One of them placed all clerical and administrative personnel of the Foreign Service, plus a considerable number of consular and commercial assistants, in a separate personnel category to be known as the Foreign Service Staff Corps. The Staff Corps people were expected to do the bulk of the routine work. If they could pass the regional examinations, they could be transferred into the FSO category. But they could avoid competing as FSOs if they wished; they could stay in the Staff Corps and be advanced up a separate, less-well-paid salary scale. They were to be equivalent to the petty officer and enlisted men of the armed forces.

A third personnel category provided for what was called the Foreign Service Reserve. This was intended for temporary specialists brought into the Foreign Service who had expertise in special fields for which people trained in diplomacy usually could not qualify. The Foreign Service expected to recruit science attach#s, cultural attach#s, and a considerable variety of economic specialists by using the Reserve. Their service was limited to five years at a stretch and they were expected eventually to return to stateside employment.

Finally, the Foreign Service was to be administered by an official called the Director General, who would report to an interdepartmental board on which the principal Washington agencies concerned with the work of the Foreign Service would be represented — State, of course, but also Commerce, Agriculture, and Labor. The Foreign Service would thus be administered separately from the Washington bureaucracy, but it would be housed in the Department of State and in practical terms it would be under the Department's control, even while giving other Washington agencies a voice in personnel and administration.

The Bureau of the Budget had a lot of reservations abut this draft legislation. It did not like the pseudo-military structure and personnel system, it objected to the Foreign Service

administering itself through the Director General, it did not like what it considered a "caste system," putting Staff Corps employees below the favored FSO corps, and it even objected to the proposed Foreign Service Institute, which Budget people thought would be a sort of "ivory tower" institution, designed to make sure that FSOs would operate on a higher intellectual level than other Federal employees.

The normal procedure for new Federal legislation prepared within the Executive Board called for all drafts to be screened by the Bureau of the Budget. Only when the Bureau had eliminated all parts it found objectionable, and substituted provisions which it favored, would proposed new legislation be submitted to Congress for study and passage. The Office of the Foreign Service knew that it was supposed to obtain BOB approval, and kept the Bureau informed of all its planning. But while the BOB people were still studying the draft legislation something most unusual happened. Some members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs got wind of the fact that reform legislation had been drafted, and demanded that this legislation be brought down to the Capitol immediately, so that appropriate members of Congress would share in all the planning at an early stage. The House was Republican in 1946, while the Administration was Democratic. Since every Congressman detested the Bureau of the Budget anyway, or so it seemed, the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee were particularly delighted at the idea that they would get the first crack at reorganizing the Foreign Service, by-passing the Democratic bureaucracy.

Over a period of several weeks, a subcommittee of three Congressmen studied the draft legislation. The chairman was John M. Vorys, Republican of Ohio. Before him and his colleagues a team from OFS appeared day after day to answer questions. The responsibility for answering most of these fell upon my friend Strom, for better than any one else he could explain the reasons for every provision and every legal phrase. The net outcome of this procedure was that Vorys passed on every sentence and was enormously impressed with the accuracy, completeness, and clarity of the drafting performance. Satisfied that an outstanding job had been done, he and his two associates obtained

the approval of the whole committee, and soon the House itself had passed the Foreign Service Act of 1946 and persuaded the Democratic Senate to go along. The final act bore the names of Congressman Kee of West Virginia, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Senator Connally of Texas, who headed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It was the Kee-Connally Act.

Congressional approval came suddenly on November 13, 1946, and brought complete euphoria to Chapin, Foster, Strom, and others in OFS. At the same time, the reaction of the Bureau of the Budget was one of furious resentment. The BOB tried to persuade President Truman to veto the act, but after consultation with his top advisors he took the opposite course and signed it. The Bureau was faced with a fait accompli. The consequences were by no means entirely happy for the Foreign Service. For several years after 1946 the embittered Bureau of the Budget people who dealt with the State Department budget requests were critical and uncooperative. I was to operate for several years in this hostile bureaucratic environment, which made it extremely difficult to obtain the personnel and funds needed by the new Foreign Service Institute. At every opportunity the Budget people tried to favor the Staff Corps, which they liked, and to punish the FSO Corps, which they detested. In the fiscal year of 1948-49, for example, it was Bureau of the Budget pressure which almost throttled the FSO category; only one small group of 20 junior FSOs was appointed, while plenty of money was available for new Staff Corps appointments. Later on I was to run into a situation where FSOs were scarce, but a disturbing amount of deadwood was accumulating in the Staff Corps.

As I look back on this situation, it is my judgment that the Bureau of Budget in 1946 was staffed by deplorably rigid and unimaginative officials. They were a doctrinaire group, trained in schools of public administration, and they were not fully capable of comprehending the postwar challenge to American diplomacy. The ones I knew personally were honest and public-spirited, but I doubt if they could have passed the kind of competitive examinations required for entry into the Foreign Service. Moreover, they were guilty of a kind of reverse snobbery. Coming from very average social backgrounds, they

disliked and resented individuals who came from upper-middle-class families, went to private preparatory schools, and attended Ivy League colleges. They apparently wanted to eliminate from positions of responsibility every person who possessed, they thought, any social advantages or intellectual attainments superior to their own.

In my work with the Foreign Service Institute, I was brought into situations where this attitude of envious bureaucrats was to do harm, in my opinion, to the national interest. One of them had to do with Foreign Service participation in the National War College. This institution was launched in 1946 at the former headquarters of the Army War College, located on military property at the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, next door to the old Washington Navy Yard. It was sponsored by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The organizing group, consisting of a senior admiral, an Army major general, and an Air Force brigadier general, approached Selden Chapin that summer and suggested that the Foreign Service supply students to attend their top-level institution to study questions of national security alongside Army and Air Force colonels and Navy captains. The idea, they said, was to select people most likely to advance to top positions, military and diplomatic, so that these people of various services could learn to know and understand one another.

Chapin called me into the picture that summer, and with him I attended a series of meetings with the War College chiefs. It was agreed — not by me, for I didn't count at that stage — that ten FSOs would be chosen to attend the first year's course. That developed into a regular custom for several years of including our most promising diplomatic officers in the student body of the National War College — ten or twelve of our people along with 90-some officers of the Armed Forces. These assignments were highly prized by Foreign Service officers, for the National War College seemed to have unlimited funds, could attract national celebrities to come and give lectures, could take all students on extensive trips to view military installations, and could bring our people into some very high-level discussions of American diplomatic and military policy.

What bothered me about the military approach to foreign policy studies was that it tended to be confrontational in character. The world was divided by the military thinkers into two kinds of nations — those who thought and felt the way Americans did, and were on our side as allies, and those who thought and felt differently and were on the other side. In international affairs we had friends and we had enemies; people were good guys or they were bad guys. If you were a man in uniform, your function was to support the good guys and battle against the bad guys. A world without enemies was inconceivable; that's why military strength was essential to protect the national security. Diplomats didn't shoot guns, but it was important that they should think like soldiers, the Pentagon thought, helping the military to defeat our country's enemies.

I won't say that our Foreign Service people who attended the National War College course were brainwashed into thinking like their colleagues of the armed forces. That would be overstating the case. But it would be remarkable if some of the military type of thinking didn't rub off on many of them, and some have told me that it did. In 1951-52 I was to become involved with the military myself, serving a year as the State Department man on the faculty of the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. I found that I had my mettle tested many times by Army colleagues who thought in confrontation terms and were not at all likely to understand the subtleties and complexities of diplomacy. Anyway, all during the early years of the Foreign Service Institute we wanted to have a senior course of our own, but were not given the necessary funds by the Bureau of Budget. So our senior people, scores and scores of them, had their educations influenced by military concepts. If that was undesirable, as I think it was, then one need look no further than those mediocre Bureau of the Budget ideologues to fix the blame.

Introducing Some New Ideas

Rethinking the Foreign Service Job

When the Foreign Service Institute was formally established in March, 1947, there were several of us on its staff who believed that a lot of new thinking was needed about how to prepare Foreign Service officers most effectively to represent the United States abroad and carry out American foreign policy. Before World War II, educational preparation for careers in foreign affairs had always emphasized international law, comparative government, and diplomatic history. We thought that these subjects were useful for general background, but that in a period in which the United States was hoping to exercise international leadership, they did not quite get at the basic problem, which was how to influence the people of other nationalities to cooperate in striving toward the goals which Americans thought important. It was all very well to talk of an international legal system and to set up a network of international agencies to deal with all the world's problems, but were we not thinking in terms of our own Anglo-American historical experience? What about all the diverse people of the world whose values, problems, goals, and thought processes were quite different from ours?

Our group thought about such questions quite a lot. If Americans were going to try to influence other nationalities, we thought, then the basic need of every individual starting out on a Foreign Service career was to have a vivid awareness of cultural and situational differences. A Russian, a Chinese, a Japanese, or an Arab would not think like an American, an Englishman, or indeed like the representative of any nationality whose historical experience was entirely within the West European cultural tradition. Our young officers should begin with the expectation that people of other nationalities would think and feel and act differently from ourselves; that they would have their own needs, their own aspirations, their own goals, and their own cultural framework. Setting out with this initial expectation of differences, our young officers should be equipped to analyze what these differences were, what their significance was for international relations, and how they could best be dealt with.

Members of our group did not suppose that we ourselves had the answers to the question we were raising. But we thought that at least we ought to try to sensitize our fledgling diplomats to the problems they would encounter. And we thought also that some of the concepts and insights of the behavioral sciences would be useful to them. If effective diplomacy started with an understanding of the mentality of others, as we believed it must, then we could emphasize in our training courses the processes by which human personalities develop. We could talk about the analysis of social and cultural surroundings, and how each child is conditioned by his environmental circumstances as he grows and develops. We could talk about the molding influence on ways of thinking which is exercised on each individual by the language he grows up speaking. And we could emphasize how important it is to understand another person's concepts and motivations if one hopes to exert any influence upon him. If persuasion is the goal of diplomacy, we would say, then don't think that you can persuade another human being in terms of your own motivations, but only in terms of those important to him.

Those of us on the Institute staff who thought in these terms were particularly three people, Henry Lee Smith, Jr., Edward A. Kennard, and myself. Smith was a linguistic scientist and the assistant director of the Institute in charge of language training; Kennard was a cultural anthropologist and linguist who had worked a great deal with exotic Indian cultures of the American Southwest, such as those of the Hopi and Navaho; and I was a former newspaperman, no kind of expert at all, just a man with some practical experience in figuring out and getting along with people. I had several friends who worked professionally in the field of cultural anthropology; they had convinced me of the importance of studying cultures in order to understand human behavior, and I had read some twenty-five or thirty books in the field. It was because of this interest that “Haxie” Smith and I soon discovered that we thought very much alike, and that in consequence we arranged to recruit Kennard for the Institute staff.

From this beginning we reached out to convert other members of the Institute staff to our viewpoint. We had no difficulty at all in reaching a meeting of minds with the experienced Foreign Service officer who was in charge of basic officer training. Laurence W. Taylor was a tall and vigorous Californian, initially trained to be an agricultural county agent, who had been attracted toward a Foreign Service career by experiences in the First World War. Larry had served mostly in European posts and had been forcibly struck by differences between American and European — especially French — ways of thinking and acting. Then during World War II he had been sent as a diplomatic observer to Brazzaville in the French Congo. The Africans he had observed there mystified him and left him with an insatiable curiosity as to how they thought and why they acted as they did.

With Taylor enthusiastically on our side we approached the Institute's director, William P. Maddox. He had more difficulty with our ideas than Taylor because his entire academic training and experience had been in political science. A Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, then a PhD at Harvard, Maddox had taught international relations at several universities, then had served during World War II with the OSS in Italy and England. He had wonderful credentials for his Institute position, but a psychological and anthropological approach to political behavior was somewhat new to him. However, he had an open mind, a generous attitude, and a willingness to be convinced. Soon he was giving us strong support. When Maddox left the Institute in 1949 to join the FSO Corps and to make the rest of his career in the Foreign Service, his successor was Harry C. Hawkins, the experienced economist whom I had met in London in 1945. Harry had spent the peak years of his career negotiating international trade agreements with foreign governments and was keenly aware of cross-cultural factors in diplomatic negotiation. He saw immediately what we were driving at and supported us completely.

The Remarkable Haxie Smith

The sparkplug of our effort to develop a more human and behavioral science approach to diplomacy was Haxie Smith, a most remarkable character. He had a doctorate in English

philology from Princeton, and from that he had gone on to become an enthusiastic expert in the sounds and idioms of American speech. In the 1930's Haxie had become famous for a radio program in which he starred, called “Where Are You From?” It consisted of introducing on the radio each night a sequence of total strangers whom Haxie would put through a test. He would have each subject pronounce a list of about 100 key words, such as “Mary, marry, merry”, “water, wash, Washington”, and “greasy” (with an S sound or a Z sound). After listening carefully, Haxie would analyze a subject's speech patterns, then tell the audience in what area he or she had been brought up and what later locations had influenced his or her speech characteristics. Without any question, Haxie had the keenest ear for speech sounds of any one I have ever known; he was perhaps unique in the entire United States. And he knew his geography. The “greasy-greazy” line, Haxie told us, ran halfway between Trenton and Philadelphia and then straight westward across the country. People in the Midwest normally do not distinguish in speech between Mary, marry, and merry. And so on.

One evening at my home I had Haxie demonstrate his method by testing out a fellow dinner guest, the wife of a Foreign Service colleague whom we were all meeting for the first time. The conversation went as follows when the test was completed: “Well, young lady, the basic pattern is North Shore Chicago. Right?” “Yes, I was born and brought up in Winnetka, Illinois.” “But you have a strong overlay of San Francisco Bay. Perhaps you went to college in that area?” “Yes, we moved to Berkeley when I was 17 and I attended the University of California.” “But I detect something else — a little whiff of Vermont in your speech. Was there perhaps some member of your family from western New England?” “Yes, my grandmother who lived with us was brought up in Vermont.”

The same sensitivity to sounds which Haxie demonstrated in analyzing American speech was also applied to foreign languages. During World War II, he had served in the Army as a captain and major and was put in charge of preparing dictionaries, instruction booklets, and other linguistic materials in a score or more of foreign languages with which American military personnel needed familiarity. To prepare these materials he had under him a

hundred or so native speakers of these languages, together with supervisors trained in linguistics who would make sure that only ordinary, every-day speech was included in the instructional booklets. They would then write it down in phonemic symbols in such a way that an American GI could pronounce it and not have to learn the Russian alphabet or a full set of Japanese characters. The spoken languages were also recorded on phonograph disks and recording tapes in such a way that a learner could practice alone, repeating each phrase until it was a perfect imitation of what the native speaker was enunciating. While not learning the languages himself, Haxie picked up the sounds of each one in such a way that he could imitate them to perfection. He could also imitate the accents of every nationality employed in his organization. He could tell endless anecdotes about his people, imitating each person's accent, whether French, German, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Turkish or Japanese. It was a virtuoso performance.

What Haxie passionately believed was that it was spoken languages which had to be taught and learned; the study of the written language could come later, after all the pronunciations and inflections were mastered. He wanted his learners to get inside the cultural context in which a language was used and if possible to get inside the heart and mind of the individual speaker. Every foreigner thinks and feels in his own language, he preached, and if you're going to get close to him you must learn to think in it too so that you can understand what he is thinking in all its emotional coloring and what his psychological motivations are. Scholarly linguistics, Haxie believed, is a separate study; leave that to the academic philologists. Practical linguistics is a branch of cultural anthropology, the study of human behavior in cultural contexts. It's through practical linguistics that you get to know and understand people, human beings, in all their complexity.

Languages and Linguistics

As the Institute's assistant director for language studies Haxie soon gathered around him a staff of trained linguistic scientists and a large group of native speakers of various

languages who would conduct classroom drills. And they were indeed drills. Every learner would practice basic sentences and phrases over and over again until he was thoroughly fluent within a limited vocabulary. Only then would the learner be permitted to range more widely afield, adding vocabulary, mastering tenses and conjugations, practicing the less frequently used idioms, and so forth. Within a year from Haxie's arrival the Institute was offering instruction in a score of languages, familiarizing new Foreign Service employees with the language of the country for which they were headed, and offering language instruction also to employees of the Department, hundreds and hundreds of whom would come to the Institute for a hour or two before going to work in the morning or after quitting work at the day's end. Because many of the people needing language instruction were not in Washington but scattered around the world at foreign posts, the Institute sent its staff linguists to many foreign countries, to train native teachers to tutor at embassies and consulates. They were taught the Institute's methods and were not allowed to deviate from them if they wished to stay employed. Later on I used Haxie's methods both in Washington and at my foreign posts and found them highly effective in making my college German and French truly usable.

From this beginning, the Institute offered steadily more and more language programs. Today, in the 1980's, I understand that it gives instruction regularly in more than 40 languages and that it has the capability to teach well over 60. In Haxie's day we operated under a strict budgetary handicap, which limited what we could do. For the Bureau of the Budget all through the Institute's early years was stubbornly determined to keep us on starvation rations; it was still bitter because the Foreign Service Act had been passed without its approval, and it intensely disliked the career Foreign Service and our attempts to make it into a highly trained diplomatic corps. But Haxie outmaneuvered the BOB people; he scouted around Washington, using his military connections, and made deals with the various intelligence agencies by which we would train their people in the foreign languages they needed if they would transfer budgetary funds to us. It was with this

additional money that Haxie was able to build up his language programs, little by little, fighting every step of the way like a mountain climber struggling for oxygen.

The Budget Bureau dictum was that the Foreign Service Institute could have the funds to do an ordinary government training job, but must not get any fancy notions about imparting intellectual stimulation. We were permitted, therefore, to have funds and personnel for the basic orientation of new officers, and Larry Taylor could operate his program effectively, giving eight weeks of training to the new FSOs who had been recruited from the officers of the Army, Navy, and Air Force at the end of the war. He took them in groups of 40, and in 1947 and 1948 often had overlapping groups. The best people we have ever had in the Foreign Service in my estimation were these new officers with wartime experience who had done their share of fighting and ardently wanted to help build a new world. I got to know hundreds of them, helped them to develop, and watched their careers flourish. I always thought Taylor did an absolutely extraordinary job of imparting to them his own idealistic enthusiasm. No one person ever had more personal influence on Foreign Service attitudes. Later on he was succeeded by an able assistant, Robert F. Hale, and he in turn by David Thomasson, both career officers whom I had first met in my orientation travels.

The Bureau of the Budget was also understanding about the orientation programs we operated for the new clerks and secretaries going out in the Foreign Service, and it was downright enthusiastic about what the Institute's assistant director for management and administrative training was doing. He and his staff were training specialists in administration and giving lectures to all trainees on management subjects. This the Bureau people could understand and appreciate. Administration! Whoopee! That was what government was all about.

So three of the four schools of the Institute managed reasonably well. It was my branch, set up on paper to offer advanced and specialized training, which was frozen out and frustrated. I had a secretary and an administrative assistant, but only one instructor, the anthropologist Kennard. He lectured to Taylor's classes and talked to Haxie's

language trainees, and we also set up some special after hours seminars at which he could reach out to Foreign Service people on Washington assignments. His lectures on “Understanding Foreign Peoples” stirred great interest. I also operated a number of seminars on economic subjects for people in the Department, and one on labor affairs. Then I got permission to send ten officers each year to universities for graduate studies in economics — a badly needed program to strengthen the Service's capabilities in economic analysis and negotiation. Some of those who benefited from this program later became ambassadors. I also worked with Haxie Smith on a program to send officers specializing in Slavic and Asian languages to universities — to Columbia's Russian Institute, for example, to Harvard's courses in Japanese studies, to Cornell's program in Chinese studies, to Yale's program on Southeast Asia, and to Princeton's Near East program. We were doing useful things, but it was an uphill struggle. We were a long way still from carrying out our dream to provide advanced training for middle-grade and senior officers. Instead, each year we watched as the Office of Personnel sent a dozen of our brightest and best to the National War College for a year of study which the military rather than the diplomatic approach to our country's foreign relations would be emphasized. From the Budget Bureau people came no objection.

No one is ever satisfied with attempts to educate a diplomatic service for its responsibilities. What the Institute undertook in its early years was fragmentary and experimental. But at least our group had a fresh approach and managed to be stimulating. I believe that we helped to sensitize hundreds of young FSOs of those early years to psychological factors in diplomatic relationships, that we put language instruction on a firm and practical basis, that we helped to tighten up Foreign Service administrative efficiency, and that we laid a useful foundation for the Institute's further development.

Planning for the American Future

It was during my Foreign Service Institute years that I first began to develop some ideas about planning for America's long-range future. It must have been some time in 1950

that I began wondering whether what the Institute was trying to do — to help shape a better US Foreign Service — wasn't entirely too unimaginative a concept. When I entered the Department of State in 1945, there was a lot of lively thinking going on about how to organize the postwar world. But by 1950 it was clear that the cooperative model of which our thinkers were dreaming, one which promoted international peace and justice, wasn't going to be brought into existence quickly, if indeed it was to be realized at all. We could do a great deal to improve our State Department organization and develop our most promising people in the field of foreign affairs, but there were an awful lot of problems ahead.

One of them was the aggressiveness and hostility of the Soviet Union, which seemed not to want a cooperative world at all but rather one which was in such a state of disorder that communist revolutions would be promoted. Europe was still in bad shape economically, despite the helpful Marshall Plan which was just getting under way. Postwar East-West relations had deteriorated sharply, and the Soviets were using their veto in the UN Security Council to block constructive proposals. The British, Dutch, and French colonies were seeking independence. It was quite uncertain still how much could be done to bring the two principal defeated nations, the Germans and the Japanese, back into the community of free peoples. China's civil war between the reactionary forces of Chiang Kai-shek and the Communist troops of Mao Zedong had resulted in the fall of Peking and Shanghai to the Communists and the withdrawal of the Nationalists to Taiwan. Most worrisome of all, the North Koreans had launched in 1950 a surprise attack on South Korea, and it seemed probable that this move had been master-minded in Moscow and Peking. If so, then perhaps other aggressions were in store — most alarmingly along Europe's so-called Iron Curtain.

In the United States, economic conditions were better than most Americans had expected, for the predicted postwar depression had not developed. But political factionalism was rampant. The Republicans had been out of power for a long time, and spokesmen for the party's right wing were particularly outraged by Truman's surprise victory in the 1948

elections. There was a steady drumfire of criticism of the administration's foreign policy, much of it centering on happenings in China and Korea. The China Lobby and Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy blamed the Mao victory in China on American mismanagement and held Secretary of State Dean Acheson responsible for encouraging the North Korean aggression. Those of us working in the State Department felt both indignation and uneasiness when our organization was repeatedly attacked by Republican spokesmen and accused of harboring communists and communist sympathizers.

I was all the more sensitive to these right-wing attacks because I was Acting Director of the Institute in the fall of 1949, following the departure of Maddox and preceding the arrival of his successor Hawkins. At this period the State Department was accused by Senator McCarthy of letting Owen Lattimore of the Johns Hopkins University, whom McCarthy called a communist leader, master-mind its training policies. Lattimore, said McCarthy, had a desk in the Department, from which he operated to disseminate Marxist ideas in all our courses of instruction. Again and again I received anxious telephone calls from our security people, and also from my own superiors in the Bureau of Administration and Office of Personnel, asking me if Lattimore had a desk in our building. Each time I said absolutely not, but the inquiries continued anyway because McCarthy was on a spree and would not take no for an answer.

Lattimore was the director of the Walter Hines Page School of International Relations at Johns Hopkins, working in Baltimore. As a former Baltimorean I knew him personally, had had several conversations with him, and had read some of his books. He was an interesting man. In his early years he had spent considerable time in China, working for a business firm in Shanghai and often making long trips into the interior of Asia. He learned to speak several Asian languages, including Chinese, Manchurian, and Mongolian, and was particularly fond of the Mongolian people and their way of life. When Soviet Russia extended its power over Mongolia and set up the Mongolian People's Republic, a religious leader known as the Living Buddha, the Dilawa Hutuktu, had to flee for his life. In some manner Lattimore learned of this man's plight and generously came to his

rescue, arranging for him to come to Baltimore. Here he remained for some years, living in Lattimore's home as a houseguest and working as an adviser and resource associate in the Johns Hopkins program of Central Asian studies, one of three Mongolians so employed. I remember seeing the Dilawa on several occasions, a tall, stately scholar in a long red robe that reached to his ankles.

Knowing Lattimore and reading his books, I could never understand why he was accused of communist sympathies. None of his books incorporated Marxist ideas. He was sometimes critical of American policies in the Far East, but he was neither pro-Russian nor pro-Chinese. What he was was pro-Mongolian; he tended to look at events in China and inner Asia from the viewpoint of what would be best for the Mongolian people. This was a peculiar slant which no one understood. It made him something of a mystery man, but it also made him vulnerable to charges that he was not a loyal American, supporting official U.S. foreign policy.

Let me now focus on what was happening in the Institute in 1950. Harry Hawkins arrived in January of that year to take over the position of director. I was sincerely happy to welcome him, since I had been greatly impressed with his keen mind and statesmanlike qualities in London five years earlier. He had retired from government service in 1948 to take a teaching position in the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, but had let himself be lured back into the State Department in the belief that at the Foreign Service Institute he could make a major contribution to the future of the United States and the world community. Certainly he had the capabilities for such a role, for he was a thoughtful and public-spirited man, had had a wealth of experience in economic negotiations as Cordell Hull's right-hand assistant on trade agreements, had done yeoman service to the Anglo-American alliance during the war years, and had what I would characterize as a top management mind. He was the only man I ever knew in American government below the Cabinet level who seemed to me well qualified to be Secretary of State, had any President seen fit to appoint him.

Harry had not been in the Institute position very long before he became quite disillusioned with the job he had undertaken. The previous year the Department had undergone another reorganization, this one master-minded by John E. Peurifoy, Assistant Secretary for Administration, with the full support of the Bureau of the Budget and the Democratic Congress. Peurifoy was a “good old boy” from South Carolina, a smooth and sophisticated wheeler-dealer who got along well with Congressmen and BOB officials, but did not much care for Foreign Service types, who were much too intellectual for his taste. Under the Peurifoy reorganization the administrative people in the Department came out on top, the Director General of the Foreign Service was deprived of all authority, the Foreign Service Institute was made a division of the Department's Office of Personnel, and in general foreign operations were under the control of Civil Service specialists in administrative management. In the saying of that time, “the administrative tail was now wagging the foreign policy dog.” In effect it was the Bureau of the Budget's revenge for having been slighted in the passage of the Foreign Service Act of 1946.

One result of these changes was that the director of the Institute was subordinate to the chief of personnel, a complete non-intellectual who understood absolutely nothing about education, never having had any college-level training except a few night courses in law. Hayward P. “Pete” Martin, born in Ozark, Alabama, in 1913, was a bright, pleasant young man of 37 in 1950. He had started his government career as a clerk in 1935 in the Department of Agriculture, had become a junior lieutenant in the Navy during World War II, had come into the State Department in 1945 as an administrative specialist, and had a reputation as an effective operator in the management field. He had become the executive director of OFS in 1946 and Peurifoy had made him deputy director general of the Foreign Service in 1947 and then director of the Office of Personnel in the 1949 reorganization.

Pete was a likable enough guy, skillful in personal relations, but it was an absurdity for a former Rhodes Scholar and University professor like Maddox or a distinguished senior public servant like Hawkins to have to report to a relative youngster with so little intellectual

background. After Hawkins had attended a few of Pete Martin's weekly staff meetings, he told me that he was humiliated to think that after years of reporting directly to the Secretary of State — in his time, Cordell Hull — he was now buried under so many administrative layers and was responsible to an individual who understood administrative operations and procedures, but very little of anything else. There was no understanding on the layers above us, he felt, of the functions and responsibilities of the Institute, and no concept of what it could and should do to provide the United States with a fully effective diplomatic service.

About this time something happened which gave us a glimmer of hope. An ambitious young congressman from Alabama, Laurie C. Battle, became interested in Foreign Service educational preparation and offered to help the Institute develop its programs, writing a letter to the Secretary of State which was routed to Hawkins for comment. Harry and I talked it over for a day, and then I came up with an idea.

“Harry, maybe we could pump this up into something big,” I said to him. “Let me start with a question. Who, if anybody, is planning for the American future? Who is giving serious thought to our national destiny in the second half of the twentieth century?”

“Nobody, I suppose. Anyway, nobody in the U.S. government. But what are you driving”

“Well, I have three kids, and the world of the next fifty years is the world they're going to have to live in,” I said. “Maybe the Institute shouldn't just be interested in educational improvement of the Foreign Service. Maybe it should be concerned about educational improvement of the whole damned Federal bureaucracy. Maybe we should be offering courses which focus on the long-range future of this country for all the brightest and most promising younger people, whether in the Executive Branch or over there on Capitol Hill. We could be thinking about a better world for my children and your children and everybody's children. We could become an institution which helps to prepare the future leaders of our government for their responsibilities in the rest of the century.”

“That's a pretty large order,” Hawkins commented. But his eyes sparkled and I could see that his imagination was beginning to ferment.

We could talk with Congressman Battle, I suggested. He seemed bright and interested, and he just might like our ideas — not only for the improvement of the Foreign Service, but for a much expanded role. If he liked our concept of operating high-level studies for future leaders all through the government, he might even propose taking the Institute entirely out of the State Department and making it an independent agency, serving all Federal departments and the Congress as well.

I was all for picking up the telephone and making a date to get together with Congressman Battle as soon as possible. But Harry, a disciplined organization man, said no, we couldn't do that on our own; we'd have to get high-level clearance so as not to confuse the Department's congressional relations. We agreed that there was no use talking to our immediate superior, the director of personnel. So we skipped him and went to see Carlisle Humelsine, the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration, a young man whom I liked and thought well of, a 1937 graduate of the University of Maryland and a former Army colonel. Born in 1915, he was just 35 in 1950, and considered something of a prodigy.

Humelsine was friendly and we were appropriately cautious. We just wanted permission, we said, to talk with Congressman Battle in response to his interest in the Foreign Service and in in-service education. It was to no avail. Humelsine absolutely forbade any such approach. Secretary of State Acheson already had plenty of problems in dealing with Congress, he told us, and didn't need this one. We should draft a routine reply to Battle's letter, thanking him for his interest. And then we should do our own job and mind our own business. We walked dejectedly back to the Institute building. Since I have never been a person who enjoyed minding his own business, I have always regretted this lost opportunity in 1950. It would have got me started in the future studies business a whole lot sooner.

Once Again, Looking to the Future

Two years later I was to have another opportunity to get involved in futurist planning. By this time I had left the Foreign Service Institute. Frustrated by our lack of success in building it up into the institution of our dreams, and worn out by several years of effort and struggle, I told Hawkins in the summer of 1951 that I must have a change. He offered to support me for a National War College assignment, but I opted instead for something else — an opening as the State Department adviser to the Army War College, then just becoming reactivated for the first time since World War II. It was located at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, and I thought that I needed to get away entirely from Washington and lead more of an outdoor life. Harry was willing for me to have the year off, for he could see that I was struggling against fatigue. When I came back, he said, he would support an appointment for me as the Institute's new director, for he had had enough of the job himself and wanted to get out, retiring completely from the public service. No, no, I said; I want to transfer to the Foreign Service and go abroad. Please fill my position with someone else; I have had all the frustration I can take. While I appreciated Harry's confidence in me, I told him, the next director should be a man with a lot of clout at upper levels of the Department; I did not have that clout.

So I went on to the Army War College position, moving my family up to Carlisle Barracks. I never returned to the Institute. My year at the AWC was a pleasant and interesting one in which I joined with a faculty of about 40 Army colonels, an Air Force colonel, and a Navy captain in participating for a year in courses offered to 150 younger colonels and lieutenant colonels being prepared for senior staff and command responsibilities. My principal functions were to recruit speakers on foreign affairs from the State Department and the university world, and then to attend all lectures and represent a State Department viewpoint in the subsequent discussion periods. My duties were not onerous and left me plenty of time to play golf at the Carlisle Country Club and enjoy the fresh air and mountain scenery. My health recovered rapidly.

Soon after New Year's of 1952 the War College curriculum turned away from foreign policy lectures and discussions to a focus on purely Army subjects. I went down to the State Department and visited Carl Humelsine and his deputy Kenny Scott, telling them that now I had some extra time and would be glad to undertake some special projects for the Department. How would they like me to spend my extra time preparing an essay on long-range career planning for officers of the Department or the Foreign Service? They were enthusiastic. A study of this nature was just what the Department needed, they said, for plans were under consideration to combine the home and field services into one combined personnel system, a united foreign affairs service. My proposed study on career development would be most timely.

So I went to work and by the end of the year produced a 120-page paper with the title “Career Development for a Foreign Affairs Service.” I thought a sensible career development plan should envisage a time-frame of 25 years, starting with young people in their mid-twenties and taking them to the age of 50, by which stage they should be ready for senior positions in the united foreign affairs service. Looking 25 years ahead in 1952 meant preparing specialists in foreign affairs for senior positions in 1977. For planning purposes, what sort of world conditions should I assume for that year? What would be the nature of relations between principal nations at that time? What duties and responsibilities would our diplomatic representatives have? What jobs would need to be performed, what kinds of trained people would be required, and through what combination of education and practical experience could they best be prepared?

Some of my Army colleagues on the War College faculty had done long-range military planning at the Pentagon and I obtained a full run-down on the methods employed. One had to make planning assumptions, and the first essential, they told me, was that these assumptions must be of such a nature that they generated planning requirements. The Army at that era looked forward twenty years in long-range planning. The procedure was to invent an imaginary war of some magnitude which would need to be fought with the

most advanced guns, tanks, planes, missiles, and other weapons, and then to figure out with precision the exact requirements for such a war. The particular war that they imagined and planned for would probably never be fought. But by planning for it realistically, the Army would acquire the equipment, material, and trained soldiers it would need for whatever real war the future might bring. It would take lead-time of several years to produce the necessary armaments and train the personnel to use them, so the plans could not just be on paper; they would have to be actually carried out and the manufacturing contracts let for the equipment needed. It was a kind of game, but one which would cost money and produce results.

I thought about this and decided that what was sauce for the goose could also be sauce for the gander. While the military people were planning for war, I could be planning for peace. It could not be a simple or easy peace, for that would impose on my foreign affairs agency no difficult personnel and career development requirements. I would have to imagine, therefore, a very difficult kind of peace, filled with continuing rivalries and tensions, a peace which would place a great strain on all our diplomatic skills. No use assuming that by 1977 the Free World would have fought and won a war with the communist powers, or fought and lost one; such conditions would not generate sufficiently difficult planning requirements. Equally it would not suffice to assume a peaceful political and propaganda struggle in which either side would have gained an overwhelming advantage and won preponderant world power. And above all I must not assume an all-out nuclear holocaust in which the superpowers would have destroyed each other. For that would leave no world to plan for.

No, the only assumption which made good planning sense would be a situation in 1977 in which no major war would have been fought, no genuine peace would have been won, and neither the Communist powers or the Free World would have gained a decisive advantage. In short, no decisive situation, just an ever-festering continuation of unresolved political difficulties. The world of 1977 would be assumed to remain very much like the world of 1952, only technologically more complex and politically more dangerous. Perhaps

I could assume some diminution of tensions on the European front, for the Western and Eastern Europeans had a common history and might well work out some adjustments. But on the Asian front I could see nothing ahead except more political ferment and disruption; the political factors there were far more diversified.

Once I had settled on my basic planning assumptions, the rest of my project flowed smoothly. We would clearly need a large and well-trained body of foreign affairs experts, speaking all the necessary foreign languages, well-read in world history, sophisticated in psychological factors, understanding all the necessary cultures, aware of ideologies and political motivations, skilled in economic and sociological analysis, and able to carry out every kind of foreign affairs operation, from secret intelligence and psychological warfare to the most benevolent cultural relations and economic development programs. We would need experts in a hundred different specialties so that we could improve our friendships and alliances with peaceful nations and build networks of cooperation, on the one hand, and on the other hand isolate the warlike and hostile nations, limiting their power to disrupt international peace and spread revolutionary disorder.

Not only would we need to train people in many different geographic and functional specialties, but we would need several different kinds of people. At the top we would need a small group of wise and imaginative policy planners, the master-minds who would formulate the objectives of American policy and weave them into a consistent pattern, developing the various plans and initiatives which would be needed. We would also need a type of person I called program executives, individuals with managerial experience who could administer large enterprises in international economic and educational development and keep our efforts to build a better balanced world situation moving steadily forward. Thirdly, we would need a large group of what I called diplomatic operators — the men and women who on a day-to-day basis could deal skillfully with other governments and peoples, analyze situations, and to carry out our policies. We would need many functional specialists — experts in influencing public opinion, experts in collecting and evaluating intelligence of all kinds, experts in every branch of economic and financial activity, experts

in developing the educational institutions of less developed countries; indeed, specialized experts in darn near everything.

These would be the people whose training and professional development would take time and expense, even though we would not, of course, assume that they should all be trained within the government service; a goodly proportion of specialists could better be recruited as needed from private life. In addition to the more highly developed people, the leaders and professionals of the foreign affairs service, we would also need large numbers of lesser employees, clerks, secretaries, administrative assistants, fiscal specialists, diplomatic couriers, custodial personnel, and so on ad infinitum. Such people could be developed to the needed levels of efficiency without a major planning effort. But it was the leaders and more highly trained professionals with whom my paper was principally concerned. We would need twenty-five years of careful personnel management, with plenty of programs of in-service training, to make sure that at age 50 they would be ripe for their responsibilities.

It was enormous fun to put this plan together, letting my imagination run. I was determined not to worry over much about which government agency would be responsible for which jobs; let the bureaucrats worry about that. My objective was to make sure that enough people with expertise would be produced or recruited as needed.

Perhaps, I wrote in my paper, many personnel planners would not want to look 25 years ahead. They would not think such a leap into the future made practical sense. In that case we could start initially with a ten-year period. Taking 1952 as our first base year, we could develop a list of the people that we could foresee would be needed in 1962. We could call that a Ten-Year Personnel Requirements Plan. Then we could have another ten-year plan for recruiting, training, and developing the necessary individuals. We could call that a Ten-Year Personnel Development Plan. Each year we could examine these plans critically, make whatever adjustments we considered advisable, and project them one year into the future. But all the time the top personnel planners should keep in mind more distant target

dates, 25 years ahead, so as not to lose sight of objectives and not to let our sense of direction become fuzzy.

In June as the Army War College year came to an end I delivered my paper to Humelsine and Scott. So what happened to it then? It was duplicated in quantity, of course, and distributed around the Department for study. There were several meetings at which I explained it to the various individuals who would be concerned with implementing it, and at each meeting there were some kind remarks about it — that it was imaginative, comprehensive, and so on. The key people involved said they would get to work right away in working up the Ten Year Personnel Requirements Plan.

But I didn't stay around Washington to see it through myself. I was in the Foreign Service by then, and getting ready for my first overseas assignment. By late August my family and I were on our way to Germany in the SS America. I think there was a sincere intention to carry out my plan. But 1952 was an election year, and in November a Republican administration was swept into power. John Foster Dulles replaced Dean Acheson as Secretary of State, and there were sweeping personnel changes down the line also. Dulles had very little interest in administration or in long-range planning; he was principally eager to get his hands personally on foreign policy. He was trained to believe that the Secretary was the man who conducted U.S. foreign relations; the rest of the Department didn't much count, except for a dozen or so individuals in the Secretary's suite who helped him with his highly personal operations. We were back in the Byrnes era, but with some important differences. Marshall and Acheson had organized the Department; it was now a coherent and functioning mechanism responsive to controls. And a lot of new appointees who eagerly rushed in, looking for political and personal advantage, only had to man the levers and operate the machinery.

My personnel plan was not totally forgotten in the Department, but not very much of it was implemented either. The pendulum soon swung back toward the Foreign Service, for the Republicans pushed the so-called Wriston program, named for the president of Brown

University who headed a reorganization committee. Under this program officers of the Department who were working on the substance of foreign affairs were to be blanketed into Foreign Service positions, and field officers were to be rotated systematically into their vacated Departmental jobs. We were to become one unified Foreign Affairs Service, using the Foreign Service personnel system. The Department struggled with this Wriston program for many years. But no one focused, as I had done in my paper, on planning a quarter century into the future.

A Period of Overseas Service

Acquiring New Perspectives

The year 1952 brought broadening changes in my career and an extended period of new experiences through which I learned better to understand the twentieth century. For in June of that year I was sworn in as a Foreign Service officer, a consul, and a secretary in the diplomatic service — in short as what we in the State Department called a career FSO. Thus began a period of sixteen years, ten of them overseas at Foreign Service posts, in which my family and I traveled widely about the world, living in foreign countries, enjoying the riches of foreign cultures, and learning to feel at home in foreign languages. These years abroad brought new dimensions to my educational development, for we traveled through some forty different countries, crossed the oceans many times, and thought deeply about the problems of the world's diverse people.

It was not ambition which led me to join the Foreign Service. It would have been my preference to stay in Washington, for I was genuinely in love with my work at the Foreign Service Institute. I felt that my job there was uniquely what I wanted to do and that I had a genuine talent for helping people to learn and develop. I also had a good knowledge, I thought, of how in-service educational experiences could contribute to career development, based on my own enthusiastic experience as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard. Furthermore, I had a sense of mission about the kind of diplomatic service I thought our

country needed. I wanted to see our brightest career people arrive at positions of high responsibility not only with sensitivity to the motivations of people but with the broadest possible understanding of world historical development. And I wanted very much for them to have a conceptual feeling for the future of civilization and a sense of the goals toward which our country should strive in its international relations.

The trouble was that I was really too excited by what I was doing. I worked beyond my physical strength and by 1951 found myself suffering from serious fatigue symptoms of a neuromuscular nature, a condition called peripheral neuritis which brought me tingling pains in my fingers and toes and in my back muscles. Part of my fatigue, no doubt, was due to the bureaucratic frustrations I described earlier. There was so much that I wanted to do, and so many difficulties that prevented me from doing them. I remember saying once that I felt like a small boy with a water pistol trying to squirt a stream through a six-inch mattress. In any event my condition could not be ignored; I needed a change.

The pleasant and relaxing year at the Army War College helped to improve my health. I thoroughly enjoyed the Army colonels with whom I worked, and the Navy captain and Air Force colonel with whom I shared an office. As mentioned earlier, I spent many hours on the local golf course that year, basking in the lovely views and stimulating air of the Pennsylvania hills. But Ruth and I knew we had a decision to make. Rather than plunge back into the Washington maelstrom, we arrived at the decision that we should try to transfer into the Foreign Service. I was sure that working overseas would be within my health limitations and at the same time an important educational opportunity for Ruth and our three children, who were 13, 11, and 5. For myself I knew that I would not be doing as important work in the field as in our headquarters organization, but I also felt that working abroad would be broadening and would provide new insights which later on would make me more useful in the Department of State.

So I applied to the Board of Foreign Service Examiners for a lateral transfer from my Civil Service position which would give me equivalent rank in the Foreign Service. I was then

44 years old. In my own mind I was not trying to compete with FSOs of long experience, and was quite prepared to do any work at which I could be useful. I was surprised, therefore, when I drove down from Carlisle one day and for my oral interview found myself confronted with a five-man examining panel. Not only were all my examiners man of high rank, but the chairman was an old-line FSO who had spent most of his career in Latin American posts. He was obviously hostile to my candidacy for the rank of Class 2 and in a cold tone asked me a long series of technical questions about Latin American diplomatic practice. When it was all over and the other four panelists had examined me more amiably on other aspects of world affairs the decision was reached to reject my application for FSO-2 but to offer m appointment in Class-3 — a rank at which I would have to take a substantial reduction in salary.

I could not reasonably object to this decision. Surely, I thought, I can work as usefully at one level as another. But the superiority attitude of the chairman annoyed me intensely. Only after some months could I bring myself to accept the appointment, for the examination had shown no interest in my career in journalism, in my wartime experiences in industry, in my work for the Office of Foreign Service, or in what I had accomplished at the Foreign Service Institute. I was not even asked about my current position at the Army War College — although by a strange irony, the man nominated later on to be my successor as State Department advisor was none other than my examining chairman! It gave me satisfaction to find out from Army friends a year later that he was not considered my equal in either popularity or usefulness.

Before leaving the subject of my examination and taking up the story of my experiences in the Foreign Service, let me have a moment of fun. One of my examiners was a former high official of the Department of Commerce, a benevolent old gentleman who had often been mentioned in the press back in the New Deal era. For some reason his questioning focused on the fact, included in my biographic data, that I had once been a student at the College of William and Mary. Disregarding my protest that my undergraduate years

had been a quarter-century ago, he proceeded to ask me questions about my college memories.

Whose statue, he asked me, stood on William and Mary's front campus? It was that of Lord Botetourt, I replied, wondering about the triviality of the question. And who was Lord Botetourt? A rather obscure colonial governor of Virginia, I replied. And what was the inscription on the base of the statue? “It reads Norborne Berkeley, Lord Botetourt,” I said, pleased that I could remember. I was a little irritated at these questions, however, and hoped that we could on to something important.

“Very good, Mr. Hopkins. Now tell us about the connection between William and Mary and the Spanish-American War.”

I was startled and completely floored. The Revolution, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, fair enough. But the Spanish-American War, long ago forgotten by my generation? I pleaded ignorance, saying I was not aware of any special connection.

“But Mr. Hopkins! Have you never heard of George Preston Blow?”

“Yes sir, I have. He was a wealthy man living at Yorktown who gave the college money for a building, the George Preston Blow gymnasium and student center.”

“Splendid, Mr. Hopkins! Now you see the connection.”

I was astonished again.

“I beg your pardon, sir, but I am afraid I don't. Please tell me.”

“Why Mr. Hopkins, George Preston Blow was on the battleship Maine when it blew up in Havana harbor!”

What comment should I have made to that? I was aghast. But my questioner was as pleased as punch that he had baffled me.

Assignment to Germany, 1952-55

One factor which encouraged me to accept my Foreign Service appointment was that the Department's Office of German Affairs showed interest in me, presumably because I had had newspaper experience and therefore some qualifications in informational activities. The State Department had recently taken over from military government responsibilities for occupied West Germany, which was in process of being set back on its feet as a sovereign nation. A large information and cultural relations program had been developed for relations with the West Germans, and individuals like me were being recruited to head up regional offices. This work appealed to me enormously, for it involved re-introducing the German people to the Western world after many years of totalitarian “brainwashing” by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi dictatorship. I had some German background from college and cultural studies and from a visit to Germany in 1950 and thought that my personal qualifications and interest were such that I could be a useful interpreter of things American.

What had been set up under HICOG, the Office of the American High Commissioner for Occupied Germany, was a series of nine regional public affairs offices, located in Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, D#sseldorf, Frankfurt-am-Main, Nuremberg, Munich, Stuttgart, and Freiburg-im-Breisgau. I was to take over responsibility for the Stuttgart operation immediately and a year later was also given Freiburg, the two offices together having as territory the new Land or state of Baden-Wuerttemberg.

Baden-Wurttemberg comprises the southwest portion of Germany adjoining Switzerland and France. It had a population in my day of about 7,000,000, a million or so of whom were Germans from further east who had fled westward to escape the Russians. Some were from East Prussia, a territory seized by the Russians themselves; some were from parts of Germany incorporated in postwar Poland; some were from Berlin, which had

been badly smashed up by the Allied bombings; and some were from what the West Germans called Mitteldeutschland, the Russian zone of occupation which eventually became communist East Germany, the Deutsche Demokratische Republik.

My area was a fascinating one, rich in history, scenery, and cultural development. It was inhabited by a thrifty and hardworking population which had developed skilled manufactures and made the most of rather meager natural resources. Assigned to the Stuttgart Consulate General by the State Department, my operation of providing American information and maintaining cultural contacts with the Germans was transferred soon after my arrival to the new United State Information Agency. Since I was an FSO, my status became that of a State Department employee on duty to another agency, a circumstance that was not to my advantage in winning Foreign Service promotions. USIA was glad to keep me as an FSO on loan, heading a staff of about 20 Americans in Baden-Wuerttemberg and approximately 180 German employees who worked for us as secretaries, information assistants, cultural liaison workers, and especially as librarians.

Although I had some regrets in finding myself farmed out to another agency, the work in Germany the next three years was fascinating. The largest part of our public affairs operation in Baden-Wuerttemberg consisted in administering ten American cultural institutions known as America Houses, in German Amerika Haus. My ten were located in Stuttgart, Mannheim, Heidelberg, Karlsruhe, Heilbronn, Ulm, Pforzheim, Ludwigsburg, Tuebingen, and Freiburg. These institutions were basically libraries, well-stocked with American books and periodicals made available in well-heated reading rooms to large numbers of German students and other readers. They were exceedingly popular with Germans and heavily patronized at a period when home life was generally bleak. In addition to their library functions, they also provided active evening programs of lectures, films, concerts, and theatre performances.

Our office in Stuttgart carried on informational and cultural contact activities of several kinds. We maintained contact with two radio stations and 50 newspapers, to which

we distributed American news and commentary, with film societies all over Baden-Wuerttemberg who showed thousands of American documentary films, with musical and theatrical organizations, and with the Ministry of Culture which ran the public school system. A great deal of important contact work was with institutions of higher learning. We had in our Land three famous old universities, those at Heidelberg, Tuebingen, and Freiburg, which dated from mediaeval times, plus a college of commerce at Mannheim, an agricultural college at Hohenheim, and two university-level engineering institutes at Stuttgart and Karlsruhe.

One of our most important activities was to run an exchange of persons program in which we sent each year hundreds of German civic and political leaders, educators, and students on all levels to the United States for educational visits. Meanwhile, a much smaller number of American lecturers and students were being brought to Germany. We were particularly fortunate in Stuttgart while we were there in having a Fulbright economist and his wife from California who spoke German and could help greatly in all our activities.

The same kinds of public affairs activities that we had in Stuttgart were carried on elsewhere in West Germany, where we must have had altogether more than fifty America Houses. The British and French also had similar programs, especially in their original zones of occupation. They were of high quality, but ours was more massive because of our superior resources and I believe it was especially effective. I saw little evidence that the Germans objected to any Allied activities at this period. There were doubtless many silent critics, but no one in the wake of Germany's massive defeat wanted to be considered pro-Nazi. And the liberal Germans who genuinely wanted to be part of the democratic West were outspokenly cooperative. It was and is my view that the Allied occupation policies in all of West Germany were highly successful. There was to be no repetition of the ill-fated occupation of the Rhineland which occurred after World War I and which had left a legacy of bitterness. This time policies were conciliatory and worked extremely well.

By the time I arrived in Germany in 1952 it was already seven years after World War II. The economy was thriving once more, helped by currency reform and Marshall Plan aid. The rebuilding of bombed areas was in full swing and much war damage had already been restored. German export industries were finding markets abroad; money was pouring in, and there were increasing signs of new wealth. The new automobile age had arrived in Europe and by the time I left in 1955 there were German cars everywhere. I often traveled by comfortable German railway trains on my visits to Bonn for staff meetings at headquarters and found them patronized by prosperous business leaders who not only looked well-dressed but overweight from good food and drink.

Living intimately among the Germans for three years I studied family and social patterns with keen interest. The superior status and authority of man over women, parents over children, and older people over younger ones was everywhere in evidence. Those Germans who told us their reactions after visits to the United States were unfailingly impressed with how much more amiable, relaxed, and egalitarian they found the American way of life. But the great status-consciousness of Germans, demonstrated in the compliance and deference which those of lesser status showed to their superiors, seemed to us not deeply rooted. Behavior was largely situational; when situations were different, personal attitudes and social behavior were different. Young people were strictly disciplined as children, but this discipline often had the effect of teaching them as they grew up to dissemble in the presence of superior authority and to escape social constriction when they could. American children seemed to German parents noisy and unruly, but the Germans were astonished to note how these children when older behaved so acceptably.

Girls in German families appeared to me to be treated very differently from boys. Daughters received more indulgent affection and grew up more psychologically secure; less was expected of them than of sons, who were equally loved but expected to toe the line and win success. The most important role for women, as wives and mothers, was to

be the comforter of male egos bruised in a social system which permitted a good deal of ruthless bullying. I strongly admired the German women I knew, and thought I had never known of a society in which females were so important and so emotionally indispensable. German males, in contrast, were both more authoritarian and emotionally far less secure. So I watched and wondered. What lay behind the deference with which American officials were treated at that period? I could not be sure how valid my diagnoses were, but I stayed on guard. The Germans I knew were dynamic and ambitious, but rarely contented. It appeared that in large measure frustration was doomed to be their fate.

This was particularly true because of the bitterness with which many Germans regarded their postwar situation. Driven westward from their homes in the east, millions of refugees had lost their homes. On top of that tragedy, Germany had been divided between East and West, and a people who feel strongly about ties of kinship found their normal relationships disrupted. Thus the emotional pot seethed. And an enormously able people, possessing a turbulent history, continued to live and wait for a future in which its dreams could begin to come true.

At the end of three years, I found that I very much wanted to stay in Germany after a period of home leave and reassignment to new duties. What would have pleased me most would have been an assignment to the political section in Bonn, for as a late entrant to the Foreign Service it seemed most advantageous to specialize, building on what I had already learned. This idea had support from my friends in German affairs in the Department, but proved to be impracticable because the embassy staffs were being reduced after the new treaty of peace was signed between the Western allies and the German Federal Republic.

So we went home in 1955 on “loose-pack” orders, final destination to be determined after arrival. Nevertheless, we departed from Stuttgart in fine spirits. My work had won me several commendations and recognitions, one of which was to head a small committee which replanned the American public affairs program in Germany to make it more

economical and effective. I was the drafting officer for the plan we devised, producing in three days a 55-page document, and it was in effect before I left Germany. The American staff which I inherited in 1952 had been greatly improved by 1955, and was regarded by my superiors in Bonn as among the best of the regional organizations. My people were a talented and creative group, and they performed their work beautifully. As for myself in day-to-day personal effectiveness, I was proud of the fluency I developed in the German language and of my ability to deliver effective speeches in it. My family made important contributions. My children were an attractive group and made many German friends, while my wife Ruth was active in German-American friendship societies and organized a German-American string quartet in which she became well-acquainted musically. We were constantly to be seen at German chamber music, symphony, opera, and theatrical performances, and our obvious interest in German cultural life was favorably commented on by Stuttgart friends. After years of great effort, we left in 1955 on a high note of satisfaction.

Three More Assignments

It was a disappointment upon returning to Washington to find that Personnel had not yet worked out a new Foreign Service assignment. But there was no difficulty in finding a Departmental position, and I was soon able to negotiate for myself a position as deputy director of the UNESCO Relations Staff in the Department's Bureau of Public Affairs. This was the Department's organization for dealing with United Nations cultural affairs, and was headed by an extraordinarily able man, my good friend Max McCullough. I held this position for two years, working especially on cultural relations between the United States and the peoples of Asia.

Our office provided liaison between the Office of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Affairs and the 100 members of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO. What we did was to work on projects to promote people-to-people cultural and scientific relationships, and strive to improve education and promote international understanding.

UNESCO has fallen into some recent disfavor, but in our day it was a genuine force to promote better international relationships. Among my duties were planning of a big international conference in San Francisco on Asian-American cultural relations, participation in an East-West cultural conference in Paris, and working with a group of Asian educators whom I accompanied on a tour of the United States — one each from ten countries — to hold seminar discussions with American educators.

Because I had an able and appreciative superior, I worked hard in this position and was rewarded with a promotion to the rank of FSO-2 for which I had originally applied. But what I really wanted was another overseas assignment. The chief of personnel proposed first that I should go out as Consul General at Winnipeg, Canada. I expressed dismay and asked if I could not go somewhere more exotic where I could use my foreign languages. A few weeks later I returned from my San Francisco UNESCO conference to find that personnel officials had assigned me to Martinique as American consul for the French West Indies and French Guiana. This was certainly much more exotic than Winnipeg but an unimportant post, normally given to an officer of Class 4. After some soul-searching, I decided not to protest, even though I had just been promoted to Class 2. For after all, it did promise what I wanted — a fascinating experience in a new area and a chance to improve my fluency in French. Had I not entered the Foreign Service, I asked myself, for international experience rather than career advantage?

The Martinique experience lasted two and a half years until June, 1960. My territory consisted of two small but populous islands, Guadeloupe and Martinique, then 1,000 miles to the south the large but thinly populated area of French Guiana. There were about 600,000 inhabitants in the islands, mostly of African origin, but in all of French Guiana only about 30,000 miserably poor people living in Cayenne and some scattered villages along the coast. The interior of Guiana, with an area the size of Indiana, was a barren jungle, inhabited by primitive Indians and some runaway black slaves who had brought their culture with them from West Africa.

The economic importance of the French Caribbean territories was quite modest. The islands produced cane sugar, rum, and bananas; Guiana virtually nothing, though the French tried to exploit the tropical timber, excavated a little gold and tantalite, and found some bauxite deposits which were too far from navigable water to be readily usable. The islands made a living from rum and bananas, but all three of my territories, juridically considered by the French not to be colonies but overseas d#partement#s of France itself, operated at a deficit and were subsidized by the French Government. The reasons for this paternalistic attitude were complex and were the subjects of some of my analytical despatches. The French spent quite a lot of money providing their Caribbean territories with social services. The schools in Martinique, for example, were excellent, and my younger son Richard benefited greatly from his courses at the local lyc#e. But having educated the local children there were relatively few jobs for them after school except to go back to the cane fields and rum factories. The combination of literacy and poverty produced a population which was frustrated and restless, open to the appeal of communism. Keeping an eye on communist activities in the area was a principal reason for maintaining the Martinique consulate.

The consular work with visas and passports was new to me, but not difficult, and my small staff was easy to manage. Political and economic reporting were no problem for a former journalist, and I wrote several hundred despatches to bring Washington files up to date on a long list of subjects which my less prolific predecessors had frequently neglected to cover. Although my French at the beginning was rusty, I worked on it religiously and soon brought it to a satisfactory proficiency. Maintaining cordial relationships with French officials and local white business leaders on the one hand, I worked through cultural contacts to establish sympathetic contacts with local black politicians and cultural leaders on the other. It was a tricky business to keep on good terms with all three groups simultaneously. But I was able to follow all developments in my territories closely, and by the time I left I was confident I had done about as much with my job as was possible.

The trouble with my area was that it was not of much intrinsic significance. Not very much happened there which was of interest to the embassy at Paris or the French desk in Washington. Once there were some riots which stirred up publicity, and the nervous French government sent a cruiser and some air-borne police reinforcements. But I watched closely and noted that the looting and burning were the work of unemployed teen-agers, not noticeably participated in by communist politicians. The only time my area was really in the center of attention was when President Charles de Gaulle visited us after an ego-pleasing official reception in the U.S. in 1960. He was for the moment quite euphoric about Americans and treated my wife and me with special courtesy.

When my Martinique assignment approached its end, I had trouble once more with personnel, which wanted again to send me to Canada, this time as the number two at the Montreal consulate general. I decided that the time had come to assert myself and insist on an assignment at my proper level. By a combination of personal letters to friends in high places and an official protest to the Director General of the Foreign Service I was able to get myself appointed instead as the American consul general at Melbourne, Australia. This was unorthodox procedure, but it worked in my case for my friends stood by me and justice prevailed. My experience illustrated a serious weakness in Foreign Service personnel practice; the most desirable assignments are made by the Office of Personnel largely on the basis of name requests from senior officials for FSOs whom they know personally, or who have well-established reputations. The way to get a good assignment, therefore, is to arrange for the employing office or post to put in a request for you. The efficiency reports written by superiors do not carry as much weight as they should. My own experience was instructive, for after I had raised a stir and arranged to have myself more properly reassigned to a more prestigious post, I found myself immediately treated with more deference and new respect.

The Melbourne assignment turned out to be easy and pleasant — in modern parlance, “a piece of cake.” It was not as politically significant as working in postwar Germany, or

as difficult as maneuvering amid the intricacies of the Caribbean. But the Australians were psychologically interesting. A people of British culture, they were isolated from their homeland in a remote portion of the world, and had deep-seated worries about their future, particularly when events in World War II demonstrated that their British mother country was no longer powerful enough to protect them. They had come to look upon the United States as a substitute protector, and Ruth and I found our hosts so hospitable and friendly that we rode a continuous popularity wave of popularity throughout our three-year sojourn.

My consular district comprised the Australian states of Victoria and Tasmania, with populations of 3,000,000 and 400,000 respectively. We found the inhabitants of our area energetic and prosperous, with a deep love of the outdoors. Many aspects of their character and personality fascinated me, and before I left the country I filed with the State Department a long despatch in which I analyzed the values and attitudes which it seemed to me were governing in Australian life, both private and public. I particularly occupied myself with the Australian future, concerned about what would happen to this nation of attractive people as they sought to work out their destiny so close to the teeming billions of Asia and so far from the peoples of European stock whom they regarded as their natural affinities.

Our Embassy to Australia was located in Canberra, an artificial capital which had been built in the sheep country of New South Wales. But Australia, despite its great distances, is basically an urban country which seeks to develop manufactures; most of the population lives in a few great cities, of which Sydney is the largest and Melbourne a close second. My position in Melbourne was a pivotal one for observing political trends, for Victoria was a “swing state” in national elections and the leaders of all four political parties lived in my area and provided me with much useful information. Thus I came to know five Australian prime ministers who were in office in my day or achieved the position in later years. Two of our good Melbourne friends were chosen by the British throne to hold the position of Director General at Canberra.

Ruth and I were fascinated to have the opportunity while in Melbourne to meet Queen Elizabeth II of Britain and her husband Prince Philip when they toured Australia on a royal visit. They were entertained at an official dinner to which we were invited and at which it was arranged that we should chat individually for a few minutes with each of the royal pair. As many had before us, we found the queen attractive and charming and Prince Philip a lively and forthright conversationist. The purpose of their visit was a fence-mending one; the British Government had aroused bitterness in Australia by choosing British membership in the European Common Market over the old system of empire trade preferences. The Australians made it clear that despite their affection for the royal family, they were determined from then on to act in their own self-interest, building up their own economy by continued European immigration and increased manufactures.

There were many problems which worried thoughtful Aussies. First of all, there was the security situation of a country with limited resources, needing help from its friends. Another was lack of population. Australia's population was only about twelve million in our day, and is still only about fifteen million. Indonesia next door has over a hundred million, which frightens Australians worried lest some of this population might spill over into lightly peopled portions of their own northwest. Australia would feel much safer if it could have forty to fifty million inhabitants, but it wants them to be of European stock, not Asian. A vigorous policy of selective immigration has been in effect many years, but results accumulate slowly. Another problem which gives Australian business leaders concern is that their industries cannot compete successfully on world markets because of Australia's small-scale, high-cost factories. A much larger home market would provide economies of scale.

While I was deep in the midst of Australian affairs, I received a telephone message one day in 1963 that Lincoln White, the State Department's popular press spokesman, had been appointed to be the new consul general in Melbourne, and that I would be assigned to a position in Washington. The decision was made suddenly, for reasons emanating

from the top level of the Department. There was no reason to hurry home, I was informed. So Ruth and I, who had already used our time in the Far East to visit Hawaii, Japan, and Hong Kong on other trips, traveled by a leisurely round-the-world route, with stops at Bangkok, Teheran, Istanbul, Athens, Belgrade, Vienna, Stuttgart, and Paris. At each stop we were warmly received by old friends, and stayed long enough not only for sightseeing but for me to engage in useful talks with professional colleagues and inform myself more fully on world conditions.

This interesting journey of several weeks concluded the overseas phase of my Foreign Service career. During my various official journeys and recreational explorations I had managed over many years to visit six continents and obtain insights into many different kinds of human societies. Join the Foreign Service and see the world! I did not feel that I had become a diplomatic expert, but everywhere that I went I explored the minds and feelings of a great variety of people. And the effect of that increase in human experience was to expand my horizons and make me feel more of a world citizen, concerned not just about America but the future of our entire global civilization.

Becoming a Long-Range Policy Planner

Return to the State Department

To be assigned back to the Department of State in the fall of 1963 was by no means an unwelcome development in our lives. From a family point of view, we would see much more of our two older Nicholas and Martha, who were already beginning their adult careers in the United States; our youngest, Richard, would be ready to enter Harvard in September 1964. Moreover, we had a serious problem in the health of my wife. For several years Ruth had been suffering from a degenerative muscular condition, a genetic disorder known as myotonic dystrophy in which she lost muscle cells from year to year more rapidly than she could replace them. She had carried on magnificently as a Foreign

Service wife in Martinique and Melbourne, but it was now necessary that she should lead a much quieter life.

Professionally I thought too that it was time to come home. My family and I had enjoyed living in foreign countries and experiencing the fascinations of different cultures. But when I thought about the work I had done in representing the United States in Germany, the French Caribbean, and Australia, in carrying out American foreign policy, and in reporting to Washington my analyses of all that was happening, it did not seem to me that my accomplishments were in any way extraordinary, or that they were particularly fulfilling. Perhaps I had done a few things which made some minor difference in the world of international relations, but in general it seemed to me that my overseas assignments lacked challenge. In the Department, on the other hand, one worked at tasks which were important to the future of our country and which might affect the global community as well. I looked forward to the possibility that my next assignment would be one comparable in importance to the work I had done in the immediate postwar years in helping to reorganize the Department and improve the future capabilities of the Foreign Service.

But when I reported on arrival to the Office of Personnel, I received a rude shock. Not only did Personnel not have an assignment ready for me, but none was even remotely in sight. There were not enough positions to go around, and hundreds of Foreign Service men and women were wandering the corridors of the Department, looking for some kind of work that they could do until formally assigned to something.

What had caused this strange situation? It was the victory of President John F. Kennedy in the election of November, 1960, and the determination of his political manager, his brother Robert, to reward as many loyal supporters as possible. What had happened in the case of the State Department was that the Kennedy people had discovered the personnel category known as the Foreign Service Reserve. I knew all about the Reserve because it was something we had planned in the Office of the Foreign Service in drafting the 1946 legislation. The original purpose was to have a personnel category which could be used for

mature specialists recruited from private life for overseas positions of a temporary nature. What we had had in mind was highly trained individuals who could take a leave of absence from university positions, labor unions, business firms, and so on and then serve overseas for from two to five years doing specialized work for which the regular Foreign Service was not well staffed.

There were no statutory requirements for FSR positions. The idea was that the Foreign Service would recruit only individuals it wanted, with specific positions in mind — a well-known scholar to be cultural affairs officer in Japan, for example, or a minerals specialist to follow mining developments in South Africa, or a petroleum geologist to serve in the Persian Gulf area. But the fact that there were no formal procedures required left the door wide open to political exploitation. Bobby Kennedy could send a job applicant over to State with a note saying, employ this individual at such-and-such a rank in the Foreign Service Reserve, and who was in a position to say him nay? Wherever budgeted vacancies could be found around the Department, Kennedy followers were slotted into them. Whether they were qualified or not few of us knew. But the result was that many positions normally used for career Foreign Service people rotating into Washington for State Department assignments were no longer available. Every budgeted position was occupied.

The Department in those days used to publish a booklet called the Foreign Service List, showing where each individual of officer rank (including FSRs) was assigned. I carefully combed through this list that fall and found that about 400 FSRs were assigned to Departmental positions. Undoubtedly most were political appointees, listed as FSR-l, FSR-2, FSR-3, or FSR-4. In a Department the size of State, with 1,500 to 2,000 FSOs employed worldwide, this would be enough to jam up the FSO assignment machinery and make it virtually unworkable. It was also enough to run up a budget deficit of several million dollars; 400 salaries averaging $20,000 each would be $8,000,000 for example. The new appointees had to be paid, and yet the unemployed FSOs, of whom I was one, had to be paid too. We had legal tenure and could not be discharged except for cause.

Some unemployed FSOs could be farmed out to other Federal agencies, some could find unbudgeted work where an extra person could be used, and some could be sent over to the Foreign Service Institute for additional in-service training. But our morale was very, very low as we observed the Kennedy appointees sitting in our jobs and doubtless having a fine time feeling important.

Each jobless individual doubtless worked out some kind of solution, as best he or she could. In my case I found an unoccupied desk in the office of the Career Development Staff, which was headed by an old friend of mine. He put me to work — quite informally, of course — and kept me busy for several months evaluating dossiers of my brother officers, writing up summaries of their performance to date, and mapping out some suggestions for future career development. Then the Board of Examiners, headed by another old friend, asked me to give its operations a major part of my time, and during the early months of 1964 I was a member of three-man panels which gave oral interviews to about 200 candidates for the career Foreign Service who had passed their written exams in 1963 and now were up for final consideration. It was interesting work, but I was dissatisfied with the lack of imagination showed by many of my fellow examiners. They were not supposed to ask factual questions but to engage the applicants in conversation, find out how their minds worked, evaluate their personalities, and determine their suitability for the Foreign Service. This policy was poorly observed; too often an individual examiner only attempted to discover how good the applicant's background was in his own particular specialty.

When the seasonal need for BEX examiners slowed down, I was off on another tack. I went to Robert Manning, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, and offered to help out in drafting speeches for officers of the Department. Manning, who knew me as a fellow alumnus of the Harvard Nieman Fellow program, accepted my offer, and in April and May, 1964, I occupied one of his desks “ghosting” speeches.

A New Department Assignment, 1964-1967

While I was as shocked as any one by the assassination of President Kennedy, which occurred about three weeks after my arrival in Washington, the State Department was much better administered under his successor. With Lyndon Johnson in the White House, Bobby Kennedy no longer had free rein to pack our Department with his people. Conditions slowly returned to normal, and by a process of attrition jobs for FSOs began opening up again. I kept in touch with friends here and there, including some Assistant Secretaries whom I knew, and in June I was able to negotiate for myself a position as the director of a large office in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, replacing one of the new FSRs whose performance had been found unsatisfactory. This bureau, known as CU, was concerned with the Department's cultural relationships with other countries, and especially with the international exchange of persons under the Fulbright-Hays program. CU has now been transferred, I believe, to the U.S. Information Agency — in my opinion not entirely a happy arrangement. For the word “cultural” takes on different coloration when coupled with programs which imply some degree of propagandistic persuasion.

My portion of CU was called the Office of U.S. Programs and Services, and its function was to be responsible for the American side of the international exchange of persons programs. For example, our staff of 110 developed programs for official foreign visitors to the United States, it selected and sent abroad “American specialists” who could visit other countries lecturing in their fields of expertise, it supervised the selection of American students, teachers, and university scholars who would go abroad on academic fellowships, and it similarly maintained supervision over the placement of foreign students, teachers, and university research scholars in American institutions. Much of this work we did not do ourselves, but farmed out to nongovernmental agencies working for the Department under contractual arrangements. Our job did involve a great deal of contact work, however, both with universities and with civic organizations set up to provide local hospitality to visitors from abroad. Starting in late June, 1964, I spent three years in this work. It seemed to me that the exchange of persons between the United States and other countries all over the world was one of the most important forms of diplomatic activity, having implications

both for the future of American foreign relations and for the future of the international community of which the United States was a member. It could not be expected to have a huge immediate impact, but if we went on exchanging selected individuals with foreign countries at the rate of several thousand each year, the cumulative effect, looking many years ahead, would necessarily be enormous.

Reflecting on this prospect, I began asking myself a number of questions. How did our programs of educational and cultural exchanges contribute to the long-range objectives of American foreign policy? And what were these objectives? One heard a good deal of rhetoric about improving international understanding and creating an enduring world peace, but it was always vague, always words, words, and more words. Specifically what kind of global community did the United States seek to create, looking ahead into the twenty-first century? How could we develop more peaceful relations with communist countries? What about the Third World? To what extent could economically backward countries be developed over the next several decades and generations, and by what means? What about such planetary problems as increasing overpopulation, insufficient food production and distribution, depletion of energy fuels and scarce mineral ores, and increasing damage to the earthly biosphere through environmental abuse? Through what kinds of arrangements should our policy planners seek to have the world community cope with such problems? Would the promise of future technology justify optimism? And what about the threat of political struggles and the economic burdens of military armaments?

There began to take shape in my mind an essay on the long-range objectives of American foreign policy, an essay setting forth in broad terms the kind of world situation we should strive to achieve. I had never seen such an essay which looked ahead into the changing future world. I thought it was high time someone should attempt to write one, and I was willing to try my hand at it. In the middle 1960s American scholars were beginning to discuss the prospects for the year 2000 and what should be done to prepare for it. We were entering in 1967 the final third of the twentieth century, with the twenty-first beginning just a generation ahead. Among those writing books on the future outlook were Kenneth

Boulding at the University of Colorado, Daniel Bell at Columbia and later Harvard, Harrison Brown at the California Institute of Technology, and Herman Kahn at the Hudson Institute. In Europe there was also activity looking forward to the new century, and a conclave of scholars was held in Oslo whose papers were gathered in a hook called Mankind 2000. And in Washington a group of younger man — scientists, journalists, educators, government planners — organized in 1966 what was to be a particularly fruitful enterprise. It was named the World Future Society, and I shall describe it later.

An Essay on the Year 2000

Since I was employed in the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, I slanted my think-piece on long-range policy toward our work in this bureau, calling it “International Education in Tomorrow's World: The Challenge to American Diplomacy.” It was a 76-page paper in which I tried to put the exchange of persons work we were doing into the framework of American planning looking toward the year 2000 and the century ahead. Educational and cultural diplomacy, I conceded, would not produce any immediate solutions to world problems and tensions, either those between the Western countries and the Soviet Union, or those between the advanced industrial countries of the northern hemisphere and the lagging tropical and subtropical countries of the Third World. What most disturbed me at the time was the widening gap between the developed and underdeveloped countries. We were living in a dichotomized world. One part was composed of advanced countries of high education, the other of poor and backward countries, whose populations were mostly illiterate. In the richer part of this dichotomy, the average individual was calculated to be twelve times as well off as his counterpart in the poorer countries. But Hudson Institute forecasters predicted that by the year 2000 he would be eighteen times as well off because of the advanced countries' more rapid economic growth.

Among the books which influenced me was The Next Hundred Years, written by three Caltech scientists, Harrison Brown, James Bonner, and John T. Weir, and published in

1957. Using statistics available in the early fifties, they calculated that world population would reach eight billion by the year 2050, but that civilization could keep pace with this increase by using improved food production methods and other technologies. The critical problem, they thought, was that the United States and other leading countries should maintain high educational standards and keep up the supply of scientists, engineers, and social planners. If so, then the future of the human race could be soundly managed. The authors hoped that by the year 2050 humanity would have the capability of controlling population increase and creating a stable planetary society for the indefinite future.

But when I wrote to Professor Brown about these findings and asked for further reading suggestions, his reply was a shocker. It was a little paperback volume called The Next Ninety Years in which he and his colleagues had taken a second look in 1967 at their forecasts ten years earlier. Their 1957 optimism that the future was manageable had given way to deepening pessimism. Statistics on population growth now showed that death rates had dropped dramatically since 1950 because of the spread of new health technologies to the less developed countries. World planners would no longer have a full century in which to prepare for a population of eight billion. Increase rates were now soaring, with birth rates as high as before, and the eight billion level would be reached soon after 2000. Meanwhile, increased food production was making slow progress. World fishery catches had reached a peak and were declining, agricultural improvements were slow in developing, and the nourishment outlook faced an uncertain future. In short, global trends were alarming. The orderly and sustainable future visualized by the Caltech authors 100 years ahead now looked very doubtful.

As I worked away on my essay, I became increasingly disturbed at the indications of a very difficult future. Late twentieth century civilization seemed in 1967 to be frighteningly out of balance. Humanity was greedily demanding too much of the resources and living space provided by our small planet. The artificial world which we called civilization was dependent on the natural world, which we seemed to be trying to over-exploit. Progress didn't need to be speeded up, but slowed down before humankind irretrievably damaged

the Earth's carrying capacity. Another imbalance was that of the dichotomized world, with the rich nations growing richer while the poor were increasingly threatened with mass poverty and hunger. And the most dangerous imbalance of all appeared to be that between increasing human capacities in technology and lagging abilities in social and political management. Wisdom was not keeping up with power.

My paper covered a lot of ground. Looking at the various imbalances, it argued that American foreign policy should seek to ease the contrasts of the dichotomized world, that it should strive strenuously to get overpopulated nations to reduce birth rates, and that it should take the lead in promoting international cooperation for global planning. We had not been at all successful in our aid programs to the Third World, despite President Truman's Point Four program of technical assistance. What had been wrong? To begin with, we had naively underestimated the difficulty of the job. Misled by the quick success of Marshall Plan aid to European countries, we had expected somewhat similar results in backward, underdeveloped countries — results which required decades upon decades of education and training. We had not sufficiently emphasized control of population, and now survival rates of young children were lowering per capita improvements in productivity. We had not put sufficient emphasis on education, for in dealing with illiterate and unskilled people we had not realized that economic development had to be won first on the educational front, as it had been in the United States all through the nineteenth century.

The American public and their government had imagined that the introduction of machinery and sophisticated industrial processes would produce overnight miracles. But the societies which we tried to help were not ready for such advanced technology. The aid program for many years was a great boon to American manufacturers of machinery and to American engineering firms delighted to go abroad and build dams and bridges and seaports, even educational institutions. At one time Congress boasted that 90 percent of foreign aid money was being spent on purchases and services in the United States. But was this what we should have been doing? The missing element was adequate schooling and training of populations. And the time frame for this was more like half a century than

the few years of any American presidential administration. A truly long-range American policy was needed, I concluded, which planned for generations ahead and which did not depend on quick results for public approval.

Some Consequences of My Efforts

How much effect can individual papers like mine, even if carefully prepared, be expected to have on a great bureaucracy like the Department of State? My paper was reproduced in 100 copies and distributed to my colleagues in our bureau. We had staff meetings set aside in which we discussed it. But there was no effort in CU to promote my ideas in other sections of the Department. I remembered an old saying in the British Foreign Office that when you write a memorandum, it is less important what you say in it than it is to whom you distribute your copies. Accordingly I made a strong effort to distribute copies of my essay around the Department of State, working through personal friends and key people who might, I thought, actually read what I had written.

One copy went to a friend who recommended it to his boss, who read it and sent it on to Henry D. Owen, the director of the Policy Planning Council. The “old-boy network” was beginning to function. I had made several efforts in past years to get acquainted with the Policy Planning Council, without any success whatever. Walt W. Rostow, Owen's predecessor, had only recently given me a quick brush-off when I tried to get him to read some memos. But Henry Owen, on the contrary, actually read my essay and then telephoned me. “Please come to see me,” he said. “Bring copies of other papers you have written. I find your ideas stimulating.”

That was the opening wedge through which I was eventually detailed to the Policy Planning Council. I did show Owen other papers which I had written — papers on how best to focus on educational assistance to Third World countries, and papers on how satellite television, then still in a developmental stage, might be utilized to make it possible for advanced countries like the United States to reach Third World countries with

educational programs on a much larger scale. A wise use of this new medium, I hoped, might bring greater international understanding and promote progress toward global cooperation. Owen liked my ideas and read my papers. He was imaginative and had a lively mind. We got on well together. At last I had found someone I could talk to.

One day toward the end of 1967 Henry Owen made me a proposition — to join his staff and work on a paper requested by the White House. President Lyndon Johnson had become interested in the feasibility of using “the miracle of satellite television” to bring educational programs into the classrooms of less developed countries. He had promised delegates to a 1967 world conference on education, held in Williamsburg, Virginia, that the United States would try to help them solve their problems in this way. It would be my job to look into questions of teaching by television and see how the new satellite system could best be employed.

I knew very little initially about the classroom use of television, but was eager to see what possibilities it had and how they could be realized in international education. Anyway, I was eager to join the Policy Planning Council, so for the next several months — the last before my approaching statutory retirement from the Foreign Service — I worked under Owen with a group of highly selected officers, charged with the responsibility for looking ahead on emerging policy issues and providing Secretary of State Dean Rusk with ideas he could use. So the final months of my State Department career were spent in the place where I most wanted to be, attending all staff meetings and discussing with colleagues the various policy proposals being prepared for the Secretary's office. At long last, it seemed to me, I was in the right place for someone of my creative temperament. It was the high point of my career.

The Policy Planning Council

The Policy Planning Council was the brainchild of Secretary of State George C. Marshall when he joined the Department in 1947. I believe that his instinct was correct — that the

Department should formulate its long-range goals and then elaborate the year-to-year policies and programs which would promote progress toward these objectives. The trouble was that the individuals charged with direction of the planning function kept changing, and each of them had ideas that were somewhat different. When George F. Kennan was the chief planner, his interest was quite naturally in Soviet-American relationships and how it was best to work to keep these on an even keel. Some of his successors could not think in terms of long-range objectives, or were not allowed to by the pressures they were under, for one frequently heard of Policy Planning personnel working on current problems. They were advisers on policy, but they were not people who planned it much in advance.

When I got back from Australia in 1963 and for several months had some free time, I looked into what the Policy Planning Council was doing. The Council's secretary, a personal friend, showed me some of the documents it had produced. The definition of planning was that the Council should study situations likely to become critical within three to five years and should outline a proposed set of policies. I looked over several papers and was not at all impressed. The problem was partly, I thought, that our expectations were too optimistic, that they tended to assume that our policies were succeeding. It seemed to me that the Council often needed to be pessimistic, to assure that our present policies were not working or would not work in the future. So I sat down and drafted some ideas to which of course no one responded.

One of my ideas was that at least one policy planning paper should assume failure in Vietnam; it should make the drastic assumption that in ten years time, communist governments would control all of Southeast Asia. To deal with this possibility, we could use the intervening ten years to pour economic and military aid into Australia and make it into an impregnable bastion of strength for the Free World. In another paragraph, I suggested that we make some pessimistic assumptions on Latin America. We should assume now, in 1963-1964, that one or more Latin American countries would adopt communist governments in the next ten or twenty years. To forestall the impact of this, a policy planning paper should propose long-range American countermeasures, involving

the building up as model democracies of several Latin American states. But the Policy Planning Council, it seemed, was not supposed to be pessimistic; it must always assume that American and Free World policies would work as they were supposed to work.

When I joined the staff of the Council in 1967, I found that the main topic on everyone's mind was how to win the war in Vietnam. We had some staff members by then who doubted that it could be won. I recall one very earnest officer who came to staff meeting one day with an eloquent “cri de coeur.” We could not win in Vietnam, he said; we were pursuing the wrong policy and should jolly well pull out. He was almost sobbing in his eloquence. But it was to no avail, for long ago we had already made the wrong decisions and had to ride them to defeat.

I plunged into my own project with great vigor. There were many enthusiasts who thought that teaching by television was a great idea. Instructional television, or ITV as it was called to distinguish it from generally informative educational programs, was being experimented on in many places. The general idea was to prepare classroom lectures or lessons at a central point in the school system, then channel it into classrooms by TV. The television set would then, it was thought, practically eliminate the need for classroom teachers. For would the lesson not be better presented on the TV screen? Experiments were underway at such places as Hagerstown, Maryland, in Indiana and Illinois where a plane flying overhead would beam TV lessons down to the schools below, and in American Samoa, where a complete system of telecasting all lessons was in use. Experiments were also going on abroad, in Italy, in Japan, and in some of the countries of North and West Africa. Our education people in AID were deeply interested in all this, but everyone waited for an effective system to be demonstrated.

I wish I could report that I came up with a dazzling worldwide project to overcome educational deficiencies everywhere by bringing TV lessons into classrooms. Alas, such was not the case. The more I studied ITV, the more deficiencies I discovered. What was most discouraging was that television could not replace teachers, or at any rate not at the

existing state of the art. Even in countries like the United States, not much success had been achieved. And in backward countries with poor technical resources, the problems were legion. Teachers complained that presenting the lesson on a TV screen was only the beginning of the teaching process, the part that teachers themselves could do most easily. The hard part was working to get children to understand the lessons, and then to supervise them as they worked over the instructional material, performing exercises and solving problems.

Television could help; of that much I was certain. But children have to work in order to learn; they can't just have a TV set educate them while they passively look and listen. It was the same lesson I had learned in my shipyard training experience during World War II — that is, that telling isn't teaching. Lessons on a TV screen have to be applied and worked on. So my final report of nearly 100 pages discussed ITV at length, with all its strengths and weaknesses, and concluded that the project required further study. We could try out some pilot projects and try to move them, but the time had not yet arrived when TV sets could take over teaching on a national or global scale.

My colleagues in S/P, as the Planning Council was called in the Department's shorthand, took a lively interest in my project, knowing that were reporting to the President himself. They had a multitude of questions and suggestions, but in the end my paper went over to the White House pretty much as I had written. The most interested individual at the White House was, I am sure, most disappointed in my cautious conclusions. This was National Security Advisor Walt W. Rostow, for I have reason to believe that it was he who had drafted in the first place the President's Williamsburg speech. Perhaps Rostow thought of education in university terms, that satellite television would enable university professors to lecture to the world's classrooms. The trouble was that the problem wasn't on this level, but on that of teaching the three R's to children from 6 to 12. UNESCO figures pointed up the issue; in the poorer countries children dropped out of school without completing the fourth grade, and most remained illiterate.

Final Months in the Foreign Service

It was while I was working with the Policy Planning Council that the war in Vietnam reached a critical stage. Our country was pouring vast resources into that unhappy country and still losing the political struggle. General William Westmoreland, an old golfing friend of mine at the Army War College, was doing all that could be done as commanding general, but was unable to prevail over a hostile population. And several of us in S/P doubted that victory was possible. Many years later, after reading many more books on the world political situation, it became my opinion that the first American mistake on Vietnam dated from Woodrow Wilson's ineffectiveness and limited racial views at the Versailles peace conference of 1919. Ho Chi Minh was there as a young Vietnamese patriot begging to have the wishes of his people for independence recognized in the negotiations. But although Wilson professed to believe in the self-determination of nations, he allowed himself to be dominated by Lloyd George and Clemenceau, who had no intention of allowing colonial problems of the Allies to be placed on the Versailles agenda. Imaginative foresight is the rarest of human qualities, and the “statesmen” of Versailles were surely not gifted with it. Nor were the peace planners of the years following World War II. We had another chance then to support the independence of Vietnam and chose the wrong side, directly against the advice of some of our own well-trained Asian specialists.

In looking back on my experience with the Policy Planning Council I have thought a great deal about how its deliberations could be made to serve the best interests of American foreign policy. The colleagues with whom I served were bright people, and they had as their director an excellent executive in Henry Owen. He had a good mix of people — some Foreign Service officers, some Departmental specialists, some exchange officers from the Pentagon, some individuals borrowed for a year at a time from universities. Outside scholars and specialists from the world of media were brought in periodically to offer their views. But still the Council never did the job as I believe that Secretary George C. Marshall intended, and certainly not as I would wish it could be done. It was continually bogged

down in the immediate problems facing the Department. As Secretary Rusk said once to Henry Owen, “I need from your operation ideas that I can use in my daily work.”

What would I wish for the Department's policy planning? I want something quite wonderful and remarkable. I would like to see a staff who were saturated in the study of history and who had some brilliant insights into the significance of our twentieth century civilization and where it is heading. I would like individuals who understand modern history, century by century — indeed, who understand also the histories of past civilizations like those of Rome and Constantinople, of India and China. I would like them to study the entire planet, and to have a vivid sense of the future human predicament. I would like them to have the kinds of minds that Alexis de Tocqueville, Henry Adams, and H. G. Wells had, and in today's world I would like them to think like Kenneth Boulding, like Harrison Brown, like Willis W. Harman, like Lester R. Brown of the Worldwatch Institute, like Bertrand de Jouvenel, and like Aurelio Peccei, who founded the Club of Rome. They would not think just of twentieth century problems, but they would try to envision the twenty-first century and to see what kind of world would be most in the interest of the American people. Harrison Brown and his colleagues at Caltech tried to think a hundred years ahead. Is it too much to ask that the Department of State should create a staff of the most brilliant individuals it can find to do the same for the American government as it flounders in the morasses of a thousand petty problems?

I regret the lost opportunities of what could have been the most brilliant presidential administration in postwar history, the eight years of the Kennedy-Johnson administration. It should have been a favorable time for constructive thinking and long-range planning if only our country had not become so deeply involved in the Vietnam struggle. There were many extraordinarily able people heading the cabinet departments during these years and many also sprinkled through the government at lower levels. I am happy that we have on the Board of Directors of the World Future Society five of the ablest executives of this period, men who think broadly of the future world.

Personally I always thought well of Dean Rusk as Secretary of State. Had it not been for Vietnam, much good might have been accomplished under his leadership. He was a broad thinker. “The job of the Department of State,” he used to say in his speeches, “is to try to bring about one kind of future rather than another kind of future.” True, true indeed. But progress was disappointing. Rusk accepted the general view that world communism was a monolithic global movement threatening the Free World. We had stopped the communists in Korea; now we must make a similar stand, he thought, in Vietnam. He thought defensively, too much in military terms. And so did the U.S. Presidents of that era, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon. Rusk had some idealistic thoughts about human brotherhood which he might have elaborated, and often used the phrase “the family of man.” But during his term of office the Department of State never came up with any imaginative global plan to promote the better world of which he dreamed — a plan which might have inspired the major part of humanity.

And as I write this in the 1980s, two decades later, our American leadership seems further than ever from formulating meaningful long-range objectives for our suffering planet.

Retirement at Age 60

My 23-year career with the State Department and Foreign Service came to an end on March 31, 1968. It was necessitated by a provision in the Foreign Service Act of 1946, which I had fully supported, that officers who had not reached the rank of Career Minister, granted mostly to ambassadors, should be retired at the age of 60. Personally, I was in excellent health and could have served longer, but there are so many difficulties in Foreign Service life as officers move from country to country, language to language, and culture to culture that I believe that early retirement is a sensible requirement.

So although I would very much have liked to serve longer with the Policy Planning Council, I was not unhappy to be turned loose to enjoy years of leisure in which I hoped to follow my intellectual interests and engage in a life of research and writing. For family reasons,

too, retirement was most welcome, for Ruth's muscular disorder, mentioned earlier, was now more advanced. She had supported my career wonderfully; now it was my turn to become her chauffeur, housekeeper, and personal assistant for a period of six years which ended with her sudden death in 1974.

Some of my Foreign Service friends have felt at the end of a long career that they received insufficient retirement recognition. But the Department was better managed in 1968 and my own experience was heartwarming. Friends and coworkers showered many attentions on me and staged goodbye parties. The Director General of the Foreign Service, Ambassador John M. Steeves, arranged a formal ceremony for me in the Department's elegantly furnished diplomatic reception area. Many kind comments were made in speeches, to which I responded with remarks deliberately kept light and humorous to make sure I could control my emotions. But I did permit myself one serious moment. I quoted from Tennyson's “Ulysses” some lines of poetry, those in which the poet has the old adventurer say, “Death closes all. But something ere the end, some work of noble note, may yet be done.” For I was determined to keep right on working and studying, and hoped that in retirement I could still produce worthwhile accomplishments.

Some Reflections on the State Department

Perspective on a Career

Having spent 23 years in the State Department and Foreign Service and having now been retired from government service for the best part of two decades, it will be my purpose in this chapter to provide some evaluative comment on America's foreign affairs establishment. I did not in my career come into contact with all parts of the home and field organizations, but I do believe that I had an unusually diverse experience upon which to draw in formulating some judgments. In the Department I worked at various times in four different bureaus, while overseas I have had opportunities at various times to visit over

fifty American embassies and consulates as well as to serve tours of duty in three very different posts, Stuttgart, Martinique, and Melbourne.

Let me dispose quickly of my own foreign affairs career — one which I consider variegated with several ups and downs. My most important accomplishments, I think, came at the beginning, when I helped the Department and Foreign Service to get properly structured and oriented for the postwar decades; and also at the end, much less successfully, when I tried hard to get the Department thinking in long-range terms about the kind of world community our country should strive to bring about in the twenty-first century. In between these two periods I did my share of useful work but I doubt that I produced truly noteworthy accomplishments. It was probably a mistake for me to transfer into the Foreign Service in 1952 and to serve ten years overseas, for my foreign assignments were mostly not challenging while in the Department I could have had much more important work to do and more impact on the course of events.

Do I think that either the Department or the Foreign Service made the best possible use of my abilities, such as they were? No, definitely not. But is that not likely to be the case in any large organization? You are a cog in a machine, striving to do your part. Sometimes you can attract attention with some imaginative initiative and accomplish something worthwhile. Much of the time you simply try to do your own particular work as effectively as you can. The amount of leadership responsibility you are given is subject to chance; a career in government is something of a lottery. It is quite likely that I was just as able as many of the individuals who served above me as Assistant Secretaries of State and Ambassadors. They were given these opportunities and did either well or poorly with them. There was no particular reason why I should have been given these higher jobs, but I am enough of an egotist to think that I could have conducted myself effectively at much higher levels than I attained.

Am I bitter as I reflect on my career? Not in the slightest. I think I was a fortunate person to serve when I did in America's most important government agency and to be allowed to

participate in a great variety of interesting activities. The most important job to be done in the modern world is to organize twentieth century humanity for a life of fulfillment of the potentialities of our species. The planet must be better organized politically and better managed socially and economically. Civilization must not only be continued but steadily improved. My contributions toward such objectives were miniscule, but I always had enough imagination to feel that the challenges of our State Department were momentous and that I was helping in my small way to meet them. I found in my twenty-three years of constant effort many personal satisfactions and a great deal of happiness.

As I reflect back on my government career, it is obvious to me that personal relationships played a major role. I got started as I did in 1945 because old friends believed in me and recommended me and because I happened to hit it off extremely well with Alan N. Steyne, the dynamic young FSO who recruited me. Much of my impact on the Department and Foreign Service in 1946 was due to my friendships with two extraordinary men I have mentioned, Just Lunning and Carl W. Strom. I was able to function successfully in the Foreign Service Institute because I had two wonderful chiefs and some very brilliant colleagues. Later I was rescued from some deplorable assignments in the Foreign Service by personal friends who thought well of me. And I owe my one promotion in 23 years of government service to Max McCullough, my very able chief in the two years I served with the Department's UNESCO Relations staff.

Where would I have gotten in my foreign affairs career without the help of the many wonderful friends whom I accumulated year after year? It seems to me that every time I dealt with the machinery of government in purely official ways I was treated callously and mechanically as just a hunk of meat, a body which had to be placed somewhere. Because of unimaginative bureaucrats making personnel decisions affecting me, I had several times to struggle like mad to keep from being seriously disadvantaged. The good things that happened to me were due to the kindness and personal interest of individuals with whom I had some kind of human relationship — friends and cordial acquaintances who thought

well of me. Without them I could not have functioned; with their help I was able to have a career which I greatly enjoyed and which ended on a high note of appreciation.

In terms of personal development my foreign affairs years were important to me. I learned about the Federal Government and how it operates; I learned what one must do to become a reasonably successful bureaucrat and diplomatist; I learned a great deal about the complexities of dealing with foreign governments and peoples; and I learned how our own diplomatic organization functions — sometimes wisely, sometimes not. Most important of all, I learned to think in broad terms of the planet Earth, so precious and so abused by mankind, and of our remarkable human species, talented and striving but oh, so imperfect and exasperating!

Evaluating the Department

The Department of State is an organization of many thousand men and women. The largest single grouping is the six thousand or so who serve in Washington. Several thousand more are scattered among foreign posts in 150 or so different countries. Roughly 1,500 of the employees in my era were Foreign Service officers of career, the FSOs to whom I have repeatedly referred, men and women who have dedicated their lives to foreign affairs and accepted the challenge of serving anywhere in the world where our country needs them. They are a dedicated and selected group, well educated in the colleges and universities of America. These days they are carefully trained by the Department in the skills and perceptions they need. Instruction in speaking foreign languages is a particularly important part of this training. Congress will not permit the Department to require fluency in foreign languages as a condition for entry into the Foreign Service, for Congressmen prefer young college graduates from Podunk Corners to the sons and daughters of the well-to-do with more sophisticated backgrounds. Sometimes visitors are critical because not every FSO at an embassy like the one at Bangkok can speak fluent Thai. But that is an unrealistic objective, since it takes years to learn this difficult but not very useful language, spoken only in one country. My judgment is that the

Foreign Service has come a long way in language skills and does extremely well, given the difficulties involved.

To serve successfully in the Foreign Service our diplomatic and consular officers must be sensitive to the feelings and thought processes of the nationalities with whom they must deal; able to see what is in their minds, and capable of communicating in such a way that a reasonable degree of rapport can be established and capabilities in persuasion achieved. Field officers are governed by foreign policies made in Washington, but they have the responsibility of transmitting to Washington the on-the-spot “feel” of local situations and sentiments. Fluency in local languages is important, and having served in two foreign language posts, I find it difficult to imagine how it would be to work mostly through interpreters or with foreign officials who have learned English or some other language of general communication.

To serve successfully in the Department of State, one should be a sophisticated bureaucrat who understands organizational rules and situations. He should be sensitively aware of the boundaries of his responsibilities, knowing when he himself must take action, when he should delegate problems to his subordinates to resolve, and when he should defer to superior authority for guidance. Many responsibilities in government are overlapping or conflicting, especially when two agencies or bureaus have very different sets of interests, and a good bureaucrat must know how to deal successfully with such lateral relationships and produce a coordinated result. It can be a complicated and decidedly tricky business.

Having thought always in career development terms I have often meditated over the process of creating well-rounded senior diplomats. In Washington, it seems to me, the headquarters people dealing with the substance of foreign relations need the cross-cultural sensitizing experience of having worked in foreign posts; and equally every field officer needs the broad policy understanding which can best be acquired through working at headquarters. For decades we have been struggling with the problem how to arrange our

personnel policies so as to obtain the best result. The perfect solution will very likely not soon be found, but education is an important part of it.

The State Department's foreign policy functions are very much complicated in Washington by the necessity of working effectively with other executive departments and agencies and with the appropriate committees and subcommittees of Congress. The Department of Defense, representing national military security, has a vital interest in many policies and decisions and is often a particularly difficult foreign affairs partner. In economic matters such departments as Treasury and Commerce are deeply involved, and many other departments have foreign interests. The Department of State is the nation's senior agency in international affairs, but it does not have the kind of firm authority which foreign offices have in many countries and in practice must often defer to other interests. And of course the Secretary of State must always defer to the President and to whatever policy coordination mechanisms are established at the White House level.

Bearing in mind both the difficulties and dangers in international affairs and the complications of coordinating policy in Washington, how effectively does the State Department function? Such a question will get different answers at different times. One reason is that the Department's leadership keeps changing, and some leaders are better than others. Another is that each election brings to Washington new elected officials — Presidents and Congresses change. The American people also keep changing their views on foreign issues as world events have impact on U.S. public opinion. The Department must continually study opinion polls and the views of leading editors and commentators in order to be aware of important shifts in public mood. So what the State Department can accomplish at any given time depends not only on its own expertise and personnel effectiveness, but on what opinion leaders think, the nature of the public mood, on who has power in the White House and the Congress, and on what Presidential policies are in the ascendancy. And all the time foreign relationships are shifting anyway with the

march of events. A gigantic global game is in progress in which the players, the power relationships, and the policies are continually changing.

Under a great Secretary of State, a man of commanding presence working harmoniously with an enlightened presidential administration, the Department of State and Foreign Service will be important instrumentalities and the abilities of talented individuals will count for a great deal. We should think of a great symphony orchestra. The musical product can't be better than the skills of the individuals but it will nevertheless be at its best only when the music of great composers is being played and a great conductor is at the podium. So let us look at composers and conductors, in this case our Presidents and Secretaries of State.

Six Secretaries of State

In my years of activity I worked under four Presidents and six Secretaries of State. The Presidents were Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. Truman was President at a very critical period when postwar decisions were being made, and it is obvious that a great deal more got accomplished under his leadership than under that of his successors. Eisenhower, it seemed to me, had few specific foreign policy goals of his own. He sought mainly to maintain American positions and calm down international differences. He was not an activist; he presided. Kennedy on the other hand was perhaps too dramatically activist at the beginning; we don't know how much he would have slowed down with the passage of events. His Peace Corps initiative was a valuable one, and his test ban treaty with the Soviet Union was important. Johnson's concept of foreign relations was simplistic; he was not at home in the foreign field and made bad mistakes in Vietnam, trying to accomplish the impossible.

My six Secretaries of State were Byrnes, Marshall, Acheson, Dulles, Herter, and Rusk. James F. Byrnes inherited in 1945 a weak and confused Department of State. Trained as a small-town lawyer, he had had very little managerial experience and instead of trying

to organize the Department of State for its postwar role he attempted to do everything himself, traveling constantly to international conferences and negotiating directly with foreign leaders. Some highly useful beginnings were made in the organizational field, but I doubt if much of the credit accrues to Byrnes himself.

General George C. Marshall, surely one of the greatest of twentieth century Americans, was a splendid executive, a leader of the highest type. Improvements in the Department which had been started under Byrnes were much further developed under Marshall. The Department prospered under his leadership and that of his deputy, Under Secretary Robert Lovett. Marshall is remembered in history for his Harvard speech which launched the successful Marshall Plan to rehabilitate the economy of Europe, but he had many other achievements, among which were the establishment of a central secretariat in the Department to centralize all diplomatic communication and the institution of a policy planning staff to plan ahead. The Department in two years under General Marshall got rather impersonal leadership, but it was wise and far-seeing.

Acheson's leadership was more personal in character. He knew the Department well after several years in executive positions, was familiar with its strengths and weaknesses, and was a highly effective Secretary. He had the advantage, of course, of following Marshall, who is reputed to have said, in effect, “Retire or replace your older executives and give men from 40 to 55 a run for their money.” This is exactly what Acheson did. I made a calculation once, based on birth dates in the Department's Biographic Register, that under Acheson the average age of the men holding the organization's fifteen top positions was 43 — surely a most astonishing average, for it meant that several Assistant Secretaries or equivalent were still in their thirties. Acheson himself at 53 was the oldest, the dynamic leader of a dynamic Department.

In my estimation Dean G. Acheson, who was not without faults and by no means always right, was the greatest Secretary of State in the history of the American republic. Historians often praise John Quincy Adams, an able and experienced diplomat, but from the modern

perspective he was mostly an historical curiosity. The job is infinitely more complex now that the United States is a leading world power. Could a man like Adams, with limited managerial experience, have welded a large twentieth century agency into an effective diplomatic instrument? One may well doubt it. Acheson made some mistakes, of course. One which I particularly regret was appointing his personal assistant John E. Peurifoy to be Assistant Secretary for Administration, a move which I thought had unfortunate consequences. But in general Acheson was well on top of his job. He showed good personnel judgment, delegated responsibilities effectively, communicated well to subordinates, and used his entire organization. In the policy field he had imagination and drive. His leadership was inspiring throughout the Department. History should give him a high niche.

After Acheson we had John Foster Dulles. I thought him an unattractive egotist, completely lacking Acheson's charisma. He thought of foreign policy in confrontational terms and sought to shore up the Free World's defenses against communism all across Europe and Asia by negotiating pacts and treaties. Perhaps these were useful but my main feeling was that Dulles thought too much in traditional terms, lacked a concept of a future world he wanted to create, and was too occupied with his own ideas to make much use of the talents of others. He was not a good executive, never learning to communicate effectively, and many areas of foreign policy were neglected under his administration.

After Dulles succumbed to illness and had to retire, Christian Herter, a man widely respected, finished out the Eisenhower years. Then came Dean Rusk, chosen by the new Democratic administration of John F. Kennedy. Rusk had headed two different bureaus of the Department in the Acheson years and was widely admired for his steadiness and sagacity. As I commented previously, I thought well of Rusk but regretted his over-concentration on the Vietnam situation. He was an able man who acted always from the highest motives and under more favorable circumstances might have been a truly great Secretary of State. I thought that the Department of State was well-managed during Rusk's

eight-year incumbency except for the unfortunate problem of the several hundred Kennedy political appointments — and over which I doubt that Rusk had much if any control.

As I think back on my six Secretaries of State it is my judgment that Marshall and Acheson were outstanding and that Rusk had more ability than he ever managed to show. But I have to say that I deplore the calibre of our Presidents during the years since World War II. Truman was perhaps the best, ill-prepared though he was for the crucial difficulties he encountered all through his incumbency. Eisenhower always seemed to me a do-nothing President, but perhaps he had a calming influence on the turbulence of his times. Kennedy was hopped-up by dreams of grandeur but might eventually have worked out well. Johnson had impressive abilities but not in foreign affairs. He knew how to get things done politically and some of his accomplishments will endure. Nixon, Ford, and Carter were unimpressive Presidents, though Nixon had some ability and there were times when I thought Carter had flashes of insight into the twentieth century world. My opinion of our present incumbent is so abysmally low that I had better not express it.

As I look upon the situation of Africa and the world community as they exist in this ninth decade of the twentieth century, I must deplore the absence of a President or presidential candidates with what I would consider an adequate grasp of the predicament of humankind. Like Martin Luther King, I have a dream. And my dream is that in some year not too far ahead, some year still in my lifetime, this great country of ours will produce a leader with a world historical vision. Such a leader, elected to the Presidency, could speak to the American people, tell them where we are in the perspective of world history, analyze for them the nature of our great planetary problems, show them where basic twentieth century trends are leading our civilization, and mobilize their aspirations for a better world by proposing long-range plans and solutions.

If we could discover and elect such a President, a man who could think and speak in world terms of the destiny of man, he could be the leader of the entire world community. For with the huge resources and formidable brainpower of the American people behind him, be

could make to other nations cooperative international proposals in which sooner or later most if not all would be willing to join. The toughest, of course, would be the fear-ridden autocrats of the Kremlin, for their emotional mind-set would not easily be altered. But our country could nevertheless become the great world leader and with the right leadership it could show even the Soviet leaders a way to escape from the nightmare of ever-more-dangerous nuclear arms rivalry.

Some Additional Reflections

Let me now narrate a personal story about Dean Acheson, dating from 1962 when he was no longer in public office but engaged once more in the practice of law. He and Mrs. Acheson made a business trip to Southeast Asia that year and came also to Australia at the urgent invitation of Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies. At this time I was Consul General in Melbourne, and when the Achesons came to our city my wife and I arranged a dinner party at our residence so that prominent local officials could meet the former Secretary of State. When the ladies left the dining room and the gentlemen settled down for some conversation over brandy and cigars, Acheson was asked a question by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Sir Maurice Nathan. Would he be willing, the lord Mayor asked, to tell the group about his relations with the new President, the young John F. Kennedy? Of course he would, Acheson replied amiably; no objection at all.

“The President has been very good to me,” he went on. “He has invited me several times to visit him in the Oval Office, and he has solicited my views on a number of situations in world affairs. When I respond he always listens courteously and attentively to what I have to say. But there is something odd about these conversations. They remind me of some of those which as a young man I used to have with my father, the Episcopal bishop of Connecticut. My father would express his ideas on issues which he thought important, and as I loved and respected my father I would listen carefully to what he said. The trouble was that when we were talking, I didn't feel that my father was living in my world. And when I

visited the White House I would go away, time after time, feeling that I, a much older man, wasn't living in President Kennedy's world!”

This comment by a remarkable man impressed me at the time and has stuck in my memory, stimulating many reflections. One of them is that it seems to me that those of us who try to be thoughtful about great historical trends and the destiny of our civilization are not living in the same world as the men of practical affairs who make political and economic decisions. They have their world; we have ours. I have told how I endeavored, in my last years with the Department of State, to get my colleagues thinking in terms of long-range world objectives. They listened politely; they even expressed interest in my ideas. But they would not really devote much thought to the world of the future in which I tried to involve them, for they had work to do and immediate problems to resolve. I can only guess at what Acheson tried to tell Kennedy, and what Kennedy's reactions were. But it seems to me likely that Acheson was trying to propound a comprehensive world view while Kennedy, an intense young man with the responsibilities and opportunities of the presidency on his mind, was thinking about the immediate actions he should take.

Another thought that I have is that while it is highly important to have as Secretary of State a man with a thoughtful concept of world affairs, it is even more important to have such a man as President. And yet I doubt that a thoughtful man who is intellectually gifted and highly educated will ever make his way to the White House under our electoral system. Perhaps the best we can hope for is that some future President will surround himself with thoughtful advisers and will make full use of them as his private think-tank, to help him formulate enlightened policies and courses of action.

What about the State Department as a repository of intellectuality, a place where brilliant minds can function and produce enlightened policies which our country could espouse and seek to implement? My experience with the Department and Foreign Service does not make me optimistic that they will attract and develop the kinds of minds that would be needed for the kind of imaginative think-tank I would like to see. Careers in foreign

affairs do not encourage imaginative thinking. The senior diplomatic officer with years of experience who represents the best product of our foreign affairs establishment is a thoughtful and civilized individual with great skills in understanding foreign peoples and carrying out American objectives in the foreign affairs field. I have known some outstanding diplomats whom I greatly respect. But I cannot think of any American diplomatic officer I have known who has impressed me as having an imaginative grasp of the whole modern world scene. The closest example to what I have in mind is the distinguished George F. Kennan, but even he, it seems to me, judging from the many books of his which I have read with rapt admiration, has limited his focus mostly to the Russian-American relationship. I have not known him to articulate ideas of what the United States might achieve as a leader of the world community, dedicated to finding solutions to planetary problems. Perhaps the difficulty is that diplomats who have become deeply immersed in the practical difficulties of international relationships simply cannot envision the very different kind of world that might be achieved by statesmanship looking fifty to a hundred years into the future, a whole quantum jump ahead of today's bubbling cauldron of conflicts and animosities.

Nevertheless, I will say this much — that in my estimation the quality of our professional foreign affairs personnel improved enormously during the years I knew, from 1945 until my retirement in 1968. A great deal of “dead wood” that we had inherited from the pre-war period was weeded out by a combination of attrition and selective compulsory retirement. And there was a systematic improvement of the most promising Foreign Service and Departmental officers which was achieved partly by providing stimulating in-service educational experiences, partly by more enlightened personnel administration, and partly by a new system of promotions in which the record of every officer has been carefully evaluated by high quality Selection Boards who each year spent many weeks at this task. It has made promotions about as fair as is humanly possible. But there is still great room for improvement in the often haphazard system by which Foreign Service officers are assigned to posts and positions, with so much depending on general reputations and who

knows whom, favorably and unfavorably. My own experience was not a very lucky one but I still think that personnel administration is better today than it used to be in the old pre-war days when a few powerful officials made all the decisions.

I would say also that both the Department and the Foreign Service have been getting quite superior human material in the past several decades and especially in the years immediately after World War II. Attracted by the dramatic augmentation of the American role in world affairs, many young people of high calibre came into our foreign affairs establishment at this time, from 1945 to 1950. I was in the Foreign Service Institute at this period and observed several hundred young FSO recruits who had come directly out of military uniform into the junior ranks of our newly reorganized service. They were bright, they were imaginative, they were accustomed to accomplishing practical tasks, and having witnessed the tragedies and wastefulness of war they were highly motivated to work for a peaceful world. Watching the recruits of this period develop over subsequent decades I felt that they were the flower of American youth and the best diplomatic officers that our country has so far produced. Most have now completed their careers and a good percentage have justified my high estimate by advancing to ambassadorial positions which they have filled with distinction.

Because of retiring in 1968 I am not nearly as familiar with the calibre of personnel in recent years. But I helped select some of the FSO recruits in my service as a Foreign Service examiner and in the course of about 200 oral examinations saw many promising candidates. So I am inclined to believe that quality has been well maintained. I also believe that the in-service training experiences arranged by the Foreign Service Institute have been highly stimulating to officers at all levels, giving a good proportion a year off to engage in advanced studies and broadening assignments within the Unites States. Programs in foreign language studies have been particularly valuable and the Foreign Service is impressively better equipped linguistically today than it was in the days when I first knew it.

There is one perennial tendency in the Foreign Service which has always given me concern, and seems to me to require unremitting attention. That is for the brightest and most promising officers to try to avoid serving administrative positions and to concentrate exclusively on work of a diplomatic nature. When that happens, then vital personnel decisions can easily be delegated to some of our less imaginative officers whose interest is not in meaningful personnel development but in just moving pieces on a chess board. Personnel placement officers are under pressure always to please the employing post rather than to provide younger men and women of promise with developmental opportunities. This can work serious disadvantages on worthy individuals who are exploited rather than encouraged to develop.

It was my observation in my Foreign Service years, reinforced by personal experiences, that those FSOs fared best in assignments and career advancement who early became attached to same particular geographic area — Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, the Far East, Africa, or Latin America. An officer of only average ability, having formed friendships in his area, would not infrequently be carried along to one good assignment after another, while a much abler officer without membership in a geographic “tribe” would be many years obtaining the same recognition. There was a special problem for late entrants like me who were neither tribally established nor known for many years of field experience in junior positions. I wanted to specialize in German and European affairs, but when that plan failed I could only take whatever might be available. In short, assignments, the heart of a foreign affairs career, are a great lottery, and the officers concerned with placement are often superficial in their judgments. I have had them say to me, “What's your opinion of so-and-so? What's he really like, aside from all that fluff in his efficiency reports? I want your personal evaluation.” Thus do casual judgments all too often determine assignments. Can the system be improved? Doubtless it can, but no personnel system that the mind of man can devise will ever exclude entirely the chance factors of human likes and dislikes.

I cannot leave this subject without commenting on the harm done to the Foreign Service by the insistence of Administration after Administration in filling the most desirable ambassadorships with political appointees. No one in the Foreign Service would object to a small number of especially qualified outsiders serving as ambassadors, but to load up the Service with half or more of the chief of mission jobs filled with political appointees does an enormous amount of damage. Not only does this practice destroy the incentive for outstanding FSOs to stay in government service, but it places an extreme burden on our embassies when the ambassador is unable to perform his professional role effectively. And needless to say, appointees with no previous experience in world affairs do the reputation of our country a good deal of damage.

Having said that, I will return to the general question of the capability of Foreign Service and Department of State personnel, I will say that while they attract able candidates at all levels, our diplomatic organization is not one which particularly rewards intellectuals of the calibre found on the faculties of the best American universities. Scholarly knowledge is not valued as highly as are personal charm, tactfulness, and conformity. It is hardly necessary for me to add that I would like to see a higher proportion of imaginative individuals with a broad concern for the future of our world. Such practical skills as speaking foreign languages and establishing rapport with foreign nationals are well-rewarded. Negotiating skills and ability to analyze political trends are important. But my experience does not encourage me to think that the FSO corps is likely to produce the kind of grasp of world historical forces that would make a great Secretary of State.

When I retired in 1968 I put the State Department and Foreign Service behind me and turned quickly to new interests and new social contacts. Nevertheless, I have glowing memories of my colleagues as being extraordinarily fine men and women, idealistic, patriotic, and capable of outstanding performance. Judging from what I hear these days from old friends and from what I read in the Foreign Service Journal and the Department's monthly journal State, things are better organized than they used to be but morale and

dedication to duty may have sagged somewhat. I strongly suspect that the golden years of our foreign affairs establishment were those that I knew in the first quarter century after World War II. But that may be just an old-timer's prejudice, and I shall not say more. I choose to think of myself as a futurist and would rather look forward to the decades ahead than dwell overmuch on those which are past and gone forever.

End of interview